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# MARCH-APRIL MOVIES AND SPE

## SATURDAY, MARCH 1

9:00 a.m. Tenchi Muyo in  
Love 1990, Anime  
2:00 p.m. Tales that Witness  
Madness 1973, Horror,  
Donald Pleasence, Kim Novak  
4:00 p.m. The Thing That  
Couldn't Die  
1958, Horror, Andrea Martin,  
William Reynolds  
7:00 p.m. War of the Worlds  
1953, Science Fiction, Gene  
Barry, Ann Robinson  
9:00 p.m. It Came From Outer  
Space II 1994, Science  
Fiction, Brian Kerwin  
11:00 p.m. The Thing that  
Couldn't Die

1958, Horror, Andrea Martin,  
William Reynolds  
1:30 a.m. It Came From Outer  
Space II 1994, Science  
Fiction, Brian Kerwin

## SUNDAY, MARCH 2

3:00 p.m. The Blob  
1958, Horror, Steve McQueen,  
Aneta Corseaut  
5:00 p.m. It Came From Outer  
Space 1994, Science Fiction,  
Brian Kerwin

## MONDAY, MARCH 3

8:00 p.m. Wild Palms  
(part 1) 1993, Futuristic,  
James Belushi, Robert Loggia  
12:00 a.m. Wild Palms  
(part 1) 1993, Futuristic,  
James Belushi, Robert Loggia

## TUESDAY, MARCH 4

8:00 p.m. Wild Palms (part 2)  
1993, Futuristic, James  
Belushi, Robert Loggia  
12:00 a.m. Wild Palms (part  
2) 1993, Futuristic, James  
Belushi, Robert Loggia

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

8:00 p.m. Wild Palms (part 3)  
1993, Futuristic, James  
Belushi, Robert Loggia  
12:00 a.m. Wild Palms (part  
3) 1993, Futuristic, James  
Belushi, Robert Loggia

## FRIDAY, MARCH 7

8:00 p.m. Doppelganger  
1990, Horror, Drew  
Barrymore, George Newbern  
12:00 a.m. Doppelganger  
1990, Horror, Drew  
Barrymore, George Newbern

## SATURDAY, MARCH 8

9:00 a.m. Record of Lodoss  
War 1991, Anime  
2:00 p.m. It Came From Outer  
Space II 1994, Science  
Fiction, Brian Kerwin  
4:00 p.m. The Undead  
1956, Horror, Pamela Duncan,  
Allison Hayes  
7:00 p.m. Crash and Burn  
1990, Science Fiction, Ralph  
Waite, Paul Gaus  
9:00 p.m. Damnation Alley  
1977, Science Fiction, Jan-  
Michael Vincent, George



Subspecies, airs Sunday, March 9 at 5:00 p.m.

Peppard  
11:00 p.m. The Undead  
1956, Horror, Pamela Duncan,  
Allison Hayes  
1:30 a.m. Damnation Alley  
1977, Science Fiction, Jan-  
Michael Vincent, George  
Peppard

## SUNDAY, MARCH 9

3:00 p.m. The Possession of  
Joel Delaney  
1972, Suspense, Shirley  
MacLaine, Perry King  
5:00 p.m. Subspecies  
1991, Horror, Michael  
Watson, Angus Scrimm

## FRIDAY, MARCH 14

8:00 p.m. Puppet Master 5:  
The Final Chapter  
1994, Horror, Gordon Currie,  
Chandra West  
12:00 a.m. Puppet Master 5:  
The Final Chapter  
1994, Horror, Gordon Currie,  
Chandra West

## SATURDAY, MARCH 15

9:00 a.m. Akira  
1989, Science Fiction  
2:00 p.m. Arcade  
1993, Science Fiction, Megan  
Ward, Peter Billingsley  
4:00 p.m. Movie: Mystery  
Science Theater 3000  
7:00 p.m. Hawk the Slayer  
1981, Fantasy, Jack Palance,  
John Terry  
11:00 p.m. Movie: Mystery  
Science Theater 3000

## SUNDAY, MARCH 16

3:00 p.m. Zeram  
1991, Science Fiction, Yoko  
Moriyama, Yukinori Nohara

## FRIDAY, MARCH 21

8:00 p.m. Howling 2: Your  
Sister is a Werewolf  
1985, Horror, Sybil Danning,  
Christopher Lee  
12:00 a.m. Howling 2: Your  
Sister is a Werewolf  
1985, Horror, Sybil Danning,  
Christopher Lee

## SATURDAY, MARCH 22

9:00 a.m. Demon City  
Shinjuku  
1990, Science Fiction  
4:00 p.m. Movie: Mystery

Science Theater 3000  
7:00 p.m. Dollman  
1991, Science Fiction, Tim  
Thomerson, Jackie Earle  
Haley  
8:30 p.m. Starman  
1984, Science Fiction, Jeff  
Bridges, Karen Allen  
11:00 p.m. Movie: Mystery  
Science Theater 3000  
1:30 a.m. Starman  
1984, Science Fiction, Jeff  
Bridges, Karen Allen

## SUNDAY, MARCH 23

3:00 p.m. They Came From  
Beyond Space  
1967, Science Fiction, Robert  
Hutton, Jennifer Jayne  
5:00 p.m. War of the Worlds  
1953, Science Fiction, Gene  
Barry, Ann Robinson

## SATURDAY, MARCH 29

9:00 a.m. Cassman: Robot  
Hunter  
1988, Science Fiction  
2:00 p.m. The Deadly Bees  
1967, Horror, Suzanna Leigh,  
Guy Doleman  
4:00 p.m. Movie: Mystery  
Science Theater 3000  
7:00 p.m. Quest of the Delta  
Knights

1993, Fantasy, David Warner,  
Olivia Hussey

9:00 p.m. Meridian: Kiss of  
the Beast

1990, Fantasy, Sherlyn Fenn,  
Malcolm Jamieson

11:00 p.m. Movie: Mystery  
Science Theater 3000

1:30 a.m. Meridian: Kiss of  
the Beast

1990, Fantasy, Sherlyn Fenn,  
Malcolm Jamieson

**SUNDAY, MARCH 30**  
2:00 p.m. Star Trek 2: The  
Wrath of Khan

1982, Science Fiction, William  
Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

5:00 p.m. Star Trek 4: The  
Final Frontier

1986, Science Fiction, William  
Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

8:00 p.m. Star Trek 5: The  
Voyage Home  
1988, Science Fiction, William  
Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

# CIALS ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

## FRIDAY, APRIL 4

8:00 p.m. Hellbound:  
Hellraiser 2  
1988, Horror, Ashley  
Laurence, Claire Higgins  
12:00 a.m. Hellbound:  
Hellraiser 2  
1988, Horror, Ashley  
Laurence, Claire Higgins

## SATURDAY, APRIL 5

9:00 a.m. E.Y.E.S. of Mars  
1991, Anime  
2:00 p.m. The Man with the  
Power  
1977, Science Fiction, Vic  
Morrow, Roger Perry  
4:00 p.m. Mystery Science  
Theater 3000  
7:00 p.m. Resurrection  
1980, Drama, Ellen Burstyn,  
Sam Shepard  
9:00 p.m. Star Quest  
1994, Science Fiction, Steven  
Bauer, Emma Samms  
11:00 p.m. Mystery Science  
Theater 3000  
1:30 a.m. Star Quest  
1994, Science Fiction, Steven  
Bauer, Emma Samms

## SUNDAY, APRIL 6

3:00 p.m. The Projected Man  
1967, Science Fiction, Bryant  
Halliday, Mary Peach  
5:00 p.m. Star Quest  
1994, Science Fiction, Steven  
Bauer, Emma Samms  
8:00 p.m. Hellraiser 3: Hell  
on Earth  
1992, Horror, Doug Bradley,  
Terry Farrell  
12:00 a.m. Hellraiser 3: Hell  
on Earth  
1992, Horror, Doug Bradley,  
Terry Farrell

## FRIDAY, APRIL 11

8:00 p.m. Hellraiser 3: Hell  
on Earth  
1992, Horror, Doug Bradley,  
Terry Farrell  
12:00 a.m. Hellraiser 3: Hell  
on Earth  
1992, Horror, Doug Bradley,  
Terry Farrell

## SATURDAY, APRIL 12

9:00 a.m. The Venus Wars  
1992, Anime  
2:00 p.m. Star Quest  
1994, Science Fiction, Steven  
Bauer, Emma Samms

4:00 p.m. Mystery Science  
Theater 3000  
7:00 p.m. Dr. Mordrid:  
Master of the Unknown  
1992, Fantasy, Jeff Combs,  
Yvette Nipar  
8:30 p.m. Ladyhawke  
1985, Fantasy, Rutger Hauer,  
Michelle Pfeiffer  
11:00 p.m. Mystery Science  
Theater 3000  
1:30 a.m. Ladyhawke  
1985, Fantasy, Rutger Hauer,  
Michelle Pfeiffer

## SUNDAY, APRIL 13

3:00 p.m. She Waits  
1971, Horror, Patty Duke,  
David McCallum  
4:30 p.m. 1984  
1984, Drama, John Hurt,  
Richard Burton  
9:00 p.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 1  
1:00 a.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 1

## MONDAY, APRIL 14

9:00 p.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 2  
1:00 a.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 2

## TUESDAY, APRIL 15

9:00 p.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 2  
1:00 a.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 2

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

9:00 p.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 3  
1:00 a.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 3

## THURSDAY, APRIL 17

9:00 p.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 4  
1:00 a.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 4

## FRIDAY, APRIL 18

9:00 p.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 5  
1:00 a.m. James Michener's  
"Space" Part 5

## SATURDAY, APRIL 19

9:00 a.m. Lily C.A.T.  
1990, Science Fiction  
2:00 p.m. The Man Who  
Could Cheat Death

1959, Science Fiction,  
Christopher Lee  
4:00 p.m. Mystery Science  
Theater 3000  
7:00 p.m. Severed Ties  
1991, Science Fiction, Oliver  
Reed, Elke Sommer  
9:00 p.m. SFC Original Movie  
(TBA)  
11:00 p.m. Mystery Science  
Theater 3000  
1:30 a.m. SFC Original  
Movie (TBA)

## SUNDAY, APRIL 20

3:00 p.m. In Between  
1992, Supernatural, Robert  
Forster, Wings Hauser  
5:00 p.m. SFC Original  
Movie (TBA)

## FRIDAY, APRIL 25

8:00 p.m. Lurking Fear  
1994, Horror, Jon Finch, Blake  
Bailey  
12:00 a.m. Lurking Fear  
1994, Horror, Jon Finch, Blake  
Bailey

## SATURDAY, APRIL 26

9:00 a.m. Tenchi Muyo in  
Love  
1992, Anime  
2:00 p.m. SFC Original  
Movie (TBA)  
4:00 p.m. Mystery Science  
Theater 3000  
7:00 p.m. Phase IV  
1974, Science Fiction, Nigel  
Davenport, Lynne Frederick  
9:00 p.m. The Blue Monkey  
1987, Science Fiction, Steve  
Railsback, Susan Anspach  
11:00 p.m. Mystery Science  
Theater 3000  
1:30 a.m. The Blue Monkey  
1987, Science Fiction, Steve  
Railsback, Susan Anspach

## SUNDAY, APRIL 27

3:00 p.m. The Night Walker  
1964, Horror, Barbara  
Stanwyck, Robert Taylor  
5:00 p.m. The Bug  
1975, Horror, Bradford  
Dillman, Joanna Miles

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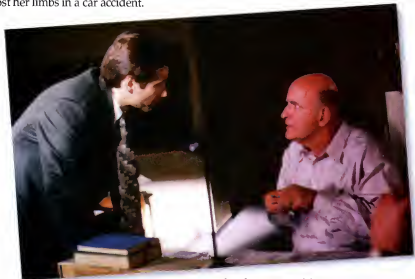
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fungus phase transformation into a sort of Chupa Kabra-like mythical goat-sucking creature, and of course the realistic references of total bloatings and decompositions of fungal invaded bodies."

Now Lindala works closely with Campbell to continue the tradition of creating novel and emotionally disturbing effects that do what Chris Carter perceives the show must do: "Scare people's pants off." Their first major collaboration was creating the crippled body torso of Mrs. Peacock, who lived with her three sons who were not only suspected of inbreeding but were rugged enough to stitch their mother back together after she lost her limbs in a car accident.



The FX crew made three different bodies for Peter Boyle's decomposition scenes in *Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose*."

"On the show 'Home,' Toby and I did this very nifty thing together. The character, Mrs. Peacock, lived on a wheel board under a bed. We had a scene where we had to pull her out from under the bed, and she is armless and legless. Her legs stop at her knees, one arm at the elbow and the other at the shoulder. We initially suggested to do something like in *Forrest Gump*, to put blue socks on her arms and legs and then key them out later. But they would not have gotten their money's worth.

"We built this little trolley with four holes in it so she could lie on it and put her arms and legs in the holes. Her legs went through holes at the midway point where we attached stumps to where her knees would be. Her real legs are jutting out from underneath the cart on the floor. What we do is drag her out and split screen off the area of the edge of the cart, and get rid of her real legs, and put the floor back where it belongs.

"The only things staying above the board were her head and shoulders, and below the

board her body went down. Continuing from just beyond her collar line was a full body prosthetic that we made to replace the actress's body. The main body piece was just a cold stone piece with gelatin legs that we manipulated a little bit through rods that were bent underneath the board. The gelatin skin is translucent and reads like flesh on film. We work with the stuff all the time. It's also edible (gruesomely laughing). The elbow and shoulder had separate joy stick controls. We constructed those with a strap-on system that strapped onto her own shoulders, so she could also motivate them through her own body movements, and a separate lever for the one existing elbow that she had all set up as a duplicate of the piece in a control mechanism form. It was a really fun rig.

"We also did the makeup on the three

brothers. Two of them were pull-over masks and one of them was a multipiece mask. They were all based on real birth defects and it was fun to put together. The stuff that Glenn did really hit the point home of the woman's missing limbs."

Campbell further elaborates on what they did and how they did it. "We shot motion control because the director wanted to show it as a shocking reveal. So we started in tight on Mulder and Scully pulling Mrs. Peacock out from under the bed, and the camera booms up and rotates to show off, saying, 'Look, no legs.' The shot was designed to feature that, and what we had to do was to do it twice, drag this huge motion control rig onto this tiny set, knock out a wall and basically set this up and do it. It worked well.

"We initially suggested that because it was dark down there they could drape dark velvet over it and do the shot as an in-camera shot without doing any effects at all. But the director wanted to do it in a way that the actors could swing their flashlights over the legs to show that there were no legs. The problem with that was where they shine the flashlight as one take, isn't going to be the same place where it is going to light up the floor in another take, where it is supposed to be empty floor with no legs. So what we would

end up doing was, when the camera hit its final position and the camera and the lights swung around, we were able to take and over-expose portions of the floor and stick it in there, so after we made our split we were able to feather in the floor and ramp-up the exposure on it. So when the flashlight swung by, it actually illuminated the real floor with no legs. It worked really well saying, 'Look no legs, we are even flashing a flashlight down there.' But again, it is not a massive effect shot. It's done in a way that if you happened to look down you just don't see any legs where there should be. What we do is practical and optical and not necessarily CGI.

"The *X-Files* is not an effects-intensive television show in the sense of opticals, but occasionally we are asked to do surprising things that are totally invisible to everyone. For example, Lori Jo and the team at Pacific Ocean Post did a great job painting out a guy's arm in the second half of the worm episode. There is a scene where Mulder steals a truck and is being chased by a bunch of guys on horses. One guy was riding kind of funky, waving his arms as if saying, 'Yahoo, I am having a good day.' It looked kind of silly, so his arm was painted and it was an invisible effect. The point is, those are the types of shots we do much more of than anything else. They are not overt like doing monsters. Yet *X-Files* shouldn't be an effects show. They don't sit down and say, 'Hey, here is a great idea for an effect to write a story around it.' They just really write good stories, and that's why *X-Files* is what it is. When they say that we are going to need some effects to tell the story, we are strictly surprised."

Lindala's final perspectives on *The X-Files* don't reflect the logical, rationale of Campbell's unique analytical mind, but instead reflect the emotional creativity that comes from not only working on the show for almost four years but from the viscera of a mind that deals in creating a quaternary shockfest. "There is a lot of interesting stuff on *X-Files* as far as social and moral issues go. I love being part of a show that brings out questions as far as the powers that be, and that makes people take a second look at things and consider other potential alternatives on what is going on rather than what is said on the news every day. As far as the gore and graphic nature of things, I feel that Hollywood presents the stuff really tamed down, watered down of the real sick stuff that is really out there. People like myself work on this show and understand the difference between this and the reality of things.

Lindala's last anecdote, however, proves that horror is truly in the mind of the beholder.

"You know what's cute? Gillian's daughter Piper is on the set, and she loves all the stuff, like the monsters we bring onto the set. In fact we have a picture of her kissing the eyeballs of one of the aliens. She loves it. Then at a Christmas party last year, one of the crew dressed up as Santa Claus, and she wouldn't go near him." □

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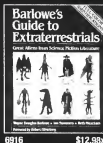
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mentioned companies urging them to build on the promise of last year's telefilm, with Paul McGann's wonderful performance — and we have been more or less ignored. (Fox has not even repeated it. They had planned to do so on New Year's Eve, but decided to rerun *Revenge of the Nerds IV* instead. Really!) As Fox has lost their option to produce a new series, and the BBC doesn't seem to care about the future of the show, some other company has to step in and help us. We want the Doctor back, and we want McGann to play him.

It's heartbreaking to think that the fans of one of the most endearing and enduring shows should be left out in the cold like this, but it's true. Perhaps you and the Sci-Fi Channel can help us? Could you please run an editorial, an article, something to bring our sad plight to light? Anything that you can do to help us would be appreciated.

(Miss) Rori Stevens

Dear Editor:

Thank you so much for beginning the *Forever Knight* series again. I just finished watching the first episode over and over! Are they going to continue making more shows? I just can't believe Nick is dead when there are so many fans out there!

Thank you, also, for obtaining the VR5 series and the lost episodes. I am really looking forward to that. I was so upset when the season ended on that other channel and they didn't renew! There was a newspaper article that said it was too "weird" and that's why they didn't renew. What do they know?

Sincerely,

Susan McDermed

While we know of no plans to revive either *Forever Knight* or *Doctor Who*, you just never know. After all, look what happened to a low rated show that was cancelled in 1969 — *Star Trek*!

Dear Editor:

Christmas just came, and for some reason I'm depressed. Then I realized why I didn't get what I wanted — there is no way anyone can get me what I want, but you!

My dream is just to have an autographed picture of Jeff Goldblum. He is the best actor I have ever seen. I have tried many places, but no one would help. Please help!

Kathryn A. Phillips

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Dear Editors:

I love your magazine and I love the Sci-Fi Channel! Science fiction is the only genre that allows you to open your mind, use your imagination and envision the impossible.

One of the qualities that I admire most about science fiction is that it allows many minority actors to play positive characters. Science fiction is one of the few forms of entertainment that doesn't have racial or sexual "hang-ups."

What I would like to see is an article in one of your future issues or a special issue (maybe for Black History month) dedicated to minority actors past and present discussing the characters they portrayed. I would love to see interviews with Nichelle Nichols, Avery Brooks, Alexander Siddig, Billy Dee Williams, LeVar Burton, Richard Biggs, George Takai and Roxann Biggs-Dawson just to name a few! I would love to hear how their characters affected them and how they feel their characters changed the face of television and movies.

I feel that this would be one of the most important issues you could ever do. It would be an issue that would be kept and shared with many "young minds," hopefully sparking an interest in the sciences. Thank you for allowing me to write you and share my idea. (How I wish I could be the one conducting the interviews!) Continue to make an excellent journal and know that I will always be a fan! Thanks.

Sincerely

Wanda H. James.

*That's a fascinating idea, and we will keep it in mind as we plot out our future issues.*

Dear Sir or Madam:

I was watching *Sci-Fi Buzz* and there was an interview with Peter Jurasik (Londo) from *Babylon 5*. To my shock and horror he said that he hoped that the fifth season will be the last! How rude can you get? Please tell me it's not true! What would I do without my *Babylon 5*?

Also, if you would be kind enough, I'd appreciate the address for *Babylon 5* fan mail so that I can write in and protest this tragedy! Also, anyone reading this letter write in and show your support for *Babylon 5* so it will continue for at least another year or two! Thanks for your time!

Sincerely,

Eric Vander Vliet

Unfortunately for *Babylon 5* fans, letter-writing will do no good, for it was series creator J. Michael Straczynski himself who decided from the very beginning that the story arc he needed to tell would only run for five years. This has nothing to do with ratings, but instead with the storyteller's art. However, perhaps all is not lost, for there are rumors of a spin-off series after *Babylon 5* has run its course.

We often cannot reply to our mail personally, but by all means write to Sci-Fi Entertainment, 441 Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 22070. You can also reach us via e-mail at [75663.2701@compuserve.com](mailto:75663.2701@compuserve.com). Be sure to visit the Dominion at <http://www.scifi.com>.



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# The Sci-Fi Channel has a new home right in the heart of Piccadilly Circus.

BY ALLISON VILLONE

**W**HEN IN LONDON, science fiction fans from around the world have a new source for science fiction: the Trocadero, Europe's largest indoor entertainment center, at Piccadilly in the heart of London. Trocadero visitors can shop till they drop at the Sci-Fi Channel retail outlet, which offers official Sci-Fi merchandise including watches, lava lamps, Leather jackets, T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps, clocks, pins and

pens. When visitors tire of shopping, there is plenty more to do, because the Trocadero is also the home of Segaworld. This two-and-a-half acre indoor theme park features six virtual reality rides, some incorporating Mega Visor Displays — headsets that give 360-degree

ming every weekend. On Fridays, evening programming will fit into the horror genre. The *Dimension of Darkness* will feature series such as *She-Wolf of London* and *Friday the 13th*, and movies like *Doppelganger* and *Howling II: Your Sister is a Werewolf*. Saturday evenings explore the

*Dimension of Imagination* with double features such as *Hawk the Slayer*, *Starman*, and Sci-Fi Channel Original movies. The *Dimension of Power* pays homage to the superhero genre on Sunday nights, with *Swamp Thing*, *The Flash*, and *Robocop: The Series* included in the line-up. The fun begins Friday and Saturday nights at 7 PM ET, and Sunday night at 8 PM ET. See local listings for movie titles, dates and times.

Another Sci-Fi Channel offering for viewers in the U.S. is *SF Vortex*, an exclusive, original, weekly 30-minute series featuring up-to-the-minute updates from the worlds of science fiction television, film and video.

The creators of *SF Vortex* hope that the show will be recognized in television history as the first series ever produced on a computer-generated virtual set. Utilizing the latest digital technology, the show integrates live studio elements with a highly stylized graphics package unlike anything else currently seen on TV. The guests you see sitting in a set with graphics and video behind them actually are seated in a room that is entirely bright green. Viewers see the finished product through the magic of computers, making the virtual set of *SF Vortex* an amazing experiment in technology, as well as entertaining television.

The series is hosted by Roger Lodge, who helps serve up fast-paced, informative, attitude-filled coverage of such series as *The X-Files*, *Star Trek*, *The Outer Limits*, *Babylon 5*, and others. *SF Vortex* also previews, reviews, and focuses on the latest sci-fi movie premieres, and features the home video releases of new and classic science fiction titles.

The climax of the show is known as *The War Room*, a free-wheeling McLaughlin Group-type roundtable debate, science fiction-style. On every episode of *SF Vortex*, *The War*

*Continued on page 90*



*SF Vortex* host Roger Lodge (at right) must wield a powerful light saber to keep his War Room guests in line and go behind-the-scenes on hit sci-fi shows such as *Babylon 5* (above).

views of virtual reality images. Hundreds of Sega video games line the walls of themed zones like Race Track, Flight Deck, Combat Zone and Sports Arena. Two zones, Carnival and Segakids, are designated for families with young children.

Also new in Europe: the Sci-Fi Channel's newest original show, *Extraterrestrial*. This half-hour magazine series for European viewers features the latest in SF, including interviews, updates and more. Check your listings for more information on this brand-new show.

New in the US: *Weekends of Wonder*, three nights of themed program-



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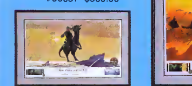
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# Bob Zemeckis turns from *Forrest Gump* to make movie magic of Sagan's *Contact*.

BY ROBERT MARTIN

**T**he passing of Carl Sagan on December 20 was certainly not a shock — the Cornell University astrophysicist had been struggling with a rare blood disorder and cancer for several years before he succumbed to pneumonia. Considerably more surprising was the lawsuit filed just six days later by Francis Ford Coppola, laying claim to the creation of the concepts in *Contact*, the Warner Brothers adaptation of Sagan's 1985 novel.

The lawsuit, filed by Coppola's Zoetrope Corporation, contends that *Contact* was adapted from a television series concept originally developed in 1975. Sagan, enlisted as a consultant to the show, reportedly had discussed with Zoetrope the possibility of adapting the

when the book was first published. At this point, the elaborate expense of Warner Brothers' preproduction work, and its commitment to high-priced acting and effects talent, will force the studio to settle Zoetrope's claims quickly and out of court. Warner simply cannot

afford the long delay that taking this case to trial would impose on the highly anticipated first "post-Gump" film by Robert Zemeckis.

First contact with aliens — the common theme of Sagan's novel and Coppola's series — was a lifelong preoccupation of Sagan's. It is hardly unique in SF, and it is not at this point clear whether Zoetrope claims any similarities beyond that basic concept. We will probably never know the merits of Coppola's case, since settlements of this sort are usually sealed, with a mutual non-disclosure arrangement.

Principal photography on *Sphere* — another Warner Brothers film about "first contact" — was pushed back to March, allowing director Barry Levinson (*The Addams*

Two of Arnold Schwarzenegger's blockbuster hits — *Total Recall* and *Conan* — will be transformed into new TV series, though each with a totally new muscle man.



series to book form. The proceeds of any such book publication, contends the suit, were to be shared by Sagan and Zoetrope. The lawsuit seeks at least \$250,000 in compensatory damages and an injunction against production or distribution of the film.

Sagan's family, who have come to view the *Contact* project as a sort of memorial, point out that the suit, filed the day after Christmas, might have seemed more reasonable if filed in 1985,

*Family*) to squeeze in a 30-day shoot for *Wag the Dog*, a dark satire written by David Mamet. Dustin Hoffman, as a scandal-plagued U.S. president, allows adviser Robert de Niro to engineer a near-war with Albania in order to rally support during an election year; Woody Harrelson plays a criminal psychopath elevated to war hero status for his role in the conspiracy. Other notables in the cast include Anne Heche, Denis Leary, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard.

This summer promises a logjam of blockbusters. *Contact*, *Batman and Robin*, *Steel*, *The Lost World*, *Men in Black*, *Air Force One*, *Event Horizon*, and *Alien: Resurrection*, are all expected to open big, and each will need to show some staying power in order to turn a profit. We can expect a lot of schedule juggling as the studios all attempt to get a clear shot at the box office. Sony Pictures





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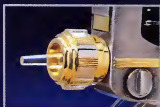
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has already pushed back the *Starship Troopers* release date to November, though the picture is already near completion.

Of course, November isn't exactly bare, either, with a new James Bond picture scheduled for a November 20 release. Details on the Bond film have not yet been disclosed, but it's widely rumored to pit Bond against a greedy businessman whose plans to rule the world begin with the former British colony of Hong Kong. Actors rumored to be in the running for the villainous role include Sean Connery, Jonathan Price, Terence Stamp and Roger Moore.

In the nearer future, considerable buzz is starting to swirl around *Mimic*, a surreal thriller from Miramax's Dimension Films subsidiary. The script for this one is credited to six different writers, which is seldom a good sign, but this time the writers include Steven Soderbergh (*The Underneath*), John Sayles (*Lone Star*), and Matthew Robbins (*Dragon-slayer*), as well as director Guillermo Del Toro, the writer-director of the lyrically creepy 1993 horror film *Chronos*. This paranoid fantasy concerns a race of gigantic cockroaches that lives undetected among humankind, thanks to their ability to "blend in" with their surroundings.

The dark approach of director David Fincher, praised for *Seven*, though condemned for *Alien 3*, seems particularly apt for the planned adaptation of Chuck Palahniuk's debut novel *The Fight Club*. The story concerns a chronic depressive who cheers himself by attending support groups for the seriously ill. When that fails, however, he allies himself to an "urban terrorist" named Tyler Durden, who indulges in such subversive pranks as splicing explicit sex into G-rated film rentals and tainting the food at exclusive restaurants. Eventually, the unnamed narrator and Tyler form an underground "fight club" where young men are paid to brutally beat each other half to death, financed by a soap-making operation that uses fat stolen from liposuction treatment centers.

In more conventional news, John Malkovich, Gerard Depardieu, Leonardo DiCaprio and Jeremy Irons are in discussions with United Artists for the latest remake of

*The Man in the Iron Mask*. The film will be the directing debut of screenwriter Randall Wallace of *Braveheart* fame, who also wrote the script. If negotiations go well, Malkovich will play Athos, Depardieu will play Porthos, DiCaprio will appear as D'Artagnan, and Irons will portray Aramis.

Stephen Hopkins, currently directing *Lost In Space* in London, expects to start work on his second major SF film before

will not be a comic book style film ... the X-Men are an ensemble of antiheroes, and we've figured out a way to make the story accessible to fans and nonfans alike. The story deals with the origins of the characters, but it's not completely based on the first comic book." Singer is currently in production with the film adaptation of Stephen King's *Apt Pupil*.

*X-Men* is one of numerous Marvel Comics in development for the big-screen at 20th Century-Fox. Others include a Chris Columbus *Fantastic Four*; and *Daredevil* from the director of *Fluke*, Carlo Carlei. *Silver Surfer* and *Ironman* are also on the boards.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is letting various producers cool their heels while he slowly contemplates his next movie, to follow his turn as Mr. Freeze in *Batman and Robin*. The top candidate at the moment is *I Am Legend*, based on the classic Richard Matheson novel, filmed twice before, as *The Last Man on Earth* with Vincent Price and *The Omega Man*, with Charlton Heston. Unlike those films, however, word is that this one has a solid script behind it, adapted by Mark Protosevich. Tom Cruise was seriously considering the lead role before he was lured to Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*.

The plot of *Eyes Wide Shut* remains a closely held secret, as is the publicity-hating Kubrick's custom. We do, however, have a few rumors to report. Word has it that Kubrick has placed an admitted junkie on the film's payroll, to work with Nicole Kidman in creating a character who leads a double life, concealing her smack-happy lifestyle from most of the people around her. Kidman and real-life hubby

Tom Cruise are said to portray husband and wife psychologists who engage in mutual affairs with a couple of patients, also married, played by Jennifer Jason Leigh and Harvey Keitel.

Or is that Keit-Elvis? Keitel has been tapped to play the role of a man who may or may not be the "living legend," Elvis Presley, in the film *Graceland*, which sees the aging Elvis as a gypsy wandering the desert performing good deeds. Bridget Fonda also appears in the film as "Marilyn."



looking good for this Christmas season is *Kull the Conqueror*, the prehistoric barbarian king from the pen of Conan creator Robert E. Howard. Fans are hoping that Kevin Sorbo, TV's squeaky-clean Hercules, will do justice to Howard's uncivilized ruffian, but Tia Carrere, as Kull's witchy nemesis, will undoubtedly be worth seeing regardless.

the end of the year. *The Chrysalids*, based on a novel by U.K. SF writer John Wyndham (*Day of the Triffids*), concerns a group of mutant humans whose well-being is threatened when their telepathic powers become public knowledge.

Speaking of mutant humanity, the *X-Men* movie — long planned as a Richard Donner project — is expected to get under way in late '97 with Bryan Singer (*The Usual Suspects*) directing. Singer told *Daily Variety*, "We're taking the subject matter very seriously. This

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Though Roger Corman's ill-fated adaptation of *The Fantastic Four* (pictured above) was never released, fans of Lee and Kirby's superteam eagerly await the new Chris Columbus version. RIGHT: Val Kilmer has passed on the *Dark Avenger's* cape and cowl to ER heart-throb George Clooney, who will have to defeat Arnold Schwarzenegger as Mr. Freeze in *Batman and Robin*.

With *The Big Lebowski*, showcasing the talented Steve Buscemi, still in preparation, the Coen brothers are prepping the opus to follow: *To The White Sea*, possibly to star Brad Pitt, concerning a World War II tailgunner, shot down during a mission to Tokyo, who must travel overland through China to arrive safely home.

The film will be adapted from a novel by James Dickey, who passed away just as we were going to press. The poet and novelist's work was at the top of the American literary pantheon and the bestseller lists some years ago, but his star had fallen recently. Some claim this decline was largely due to small-minded literary politics — Dickey was a harsh critic of feminist poetry, and not enough of a leftist for some; and he was too successful for others. Typical was Robert Bly's misperceived dismissal of the writer as "a Georgia cracker Kipling." Dickey's best-known work is the novel *Deliverance*; he also wrote the screenplay for John Boorman's screen version.

Betty Thomas, the director of *Howard Stern's Private Parts*, has offered a role in the Eddie Murphy vehicle *Doctor Dolittle* to the noted wacky radio host. The nonmusical remake is scheduled to start shooting for Fox in March. The only role we can recall from the original even vaguely resembling Stern



is the two-headed llama, so we assume a part may be written especially for the long-haired talk radio artist.

Lucie Dolene, 66, who dubbed the French version of the song "One Day My Prince Will Come" for Disney's *Snow White* almost three decades ago, was awarded a provisional 130,000 francs (\$22,000) in a suit claiming that the studio "stole her voice." She had sued for half a million francs (\$100,000) under a French law guaranteeing copyright to artists who haven't made explicit deals for video rights. Dolene was paid \$1,000 for her voice work in 1958. More recently, she lent

her voice to the teapot in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

L. Ron Hubbard's novel *Battlefield Earth* remains under development as a Travolta vehicle at MGM/UA ("It's like *Star Wars*, only better," says Travolta of the novel). It may, however, undergo a name change if the new Gene Roddenberry-created television series, *Battleground: Earth*, takes off. Roddenberry's series about Earth under alien siege is among the many new SF and fantasy action shows expected to launch before the end of the year, a roster that also includes *Total Recall: The Series*, *Team Knight Rider*, *Nightman*, *Road Warrior* and *Coman the Adventurer*, starring German bodybuilder Ralf Moeller in the role created by Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Britain's Granada Television has made a deal to produce a TV movie entitled 2020, intended as a realistic police drama set two decades into the next century, for Fox Broadcasting. In a unique twist on the American habit of remaking British TV shows for U.S. audiences, Granada will make two different versions of 2020, one set in the United States for Fox, and an entirely British version for the United Kingdom television market.

In another bold step, Fox expects to debut the first stop-motion animated television series in the fall of this year, a collaboration between writer Alan Spencer (creator of *Sledge Hammer!*) and animator Corky Quackenbush (whose shorts appear on *Mad TV*). The title and concept remain secret, though it's hinted that the show will be "Catcher in the Rye meets *The Omen*." Fox is also developing a live-action series based on the Dilbert comic strip, though it's hard to imagine how the Dogbert character would work as a real canine.

A few details have finally been revealed about Steven Spielberg's prime-time animated SF series, *Invasion: America*, in preparation for the WB network.

Leonard Nimoy will perform a principal voice for the series, while another veteran Trekker, writer-producer Harve Bennett, will join Spielberg as a second executive producer. Other voice talent includes Kristy McNichol and Edward Albert. The story line concerns a half-alien teenager who discovers that he must serve as Earth's chief defender against an invasion of tyrannical aliens from the planet Tyrus. □

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# It doesn't pay to mess with Mother Nature, but it can be fun watching mad scientists try.

BY STEVEN PUCHALSKI

**I**F YOU'RE A FAN OF SCI-FI CINEMA, you're probably familiar with the bad rap given to scientists — particularly when they're slightly mad and try to play God. Whether it's through human experimentation, journeying into the unknown, or that old favorite of creating life thanks to a handy bolt of lightning, their results only end up proving that humankind shouldn't meddle with Mother Nature. This theme shows no signs of disappearing though,

because moviegoers are always fascinated with the idea of peering into the unknown, especially when they can do it vicariously, thanks to any of the following examples.

We begin with the newly released *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (New Line). Not because it's the best of the lot,

island full of half-human monstrosities is the problematic result. Eventually, all hell breaks loose when the island creatures get their first taste of fresh flesh.

This is a massive, misguided exercise in the grotesque, and though laden with effective Stan Winston makeup

effects, its dramatic potential and larger themes are thoroughly missing in action. Of course, some of the film's chaotic nature is attributable to the production's history, which included the unceremonious sacking of its original director (the talented Richard Stanley) and the hiring of John Frankenheimer, who turned a complex ethical struggle into a simple slave revolt scenario.

While Brando's performance is eccentric, the brief role makes him seem like nothing more than a brilliant flake. Plus, it's impossible to ignore his present girth. This guy really knows how to fill out a muumuu, and in one of the film's many unintentional laughs, the mountainous Moreau is said to be a vegetarian! If that's true, he must have crateloads of cannolis air-lifted in every morning. Meanwhile, Kilmer gives an equally silly performance as a neurosurgeon turned doped-up madman, who gets to take over Moreau's reign in the second half (and do a dead-on Brando imitation in the process).

Although Brando and Kilmer receive top billing, Thewlis is actually the center of the film, and he does his damndest to keep his dignity (which is hard to do when you're surrounded by tiny, laughable mice-men). In supporting roles, Fairuza Balk is appropriately feline as Moreau's "daughter," while Nelson de la Rosa steals every scene as Moreau's tiny assistant. More entertaining for its pieces, than as a whole, *Moreau* gives you plenty of bang for your buck, but never affects you as any more than a big-budget freak show. As island adventures go, Gilligan and the Skipper had more emotional resonance.

Scientists attempting to restructure the human body are also at the core of *Wes Craven Presents Mind Ripper* (WarnerVision). But in this instance, the results are strictly of the B-movie variety and the filmmakers don't



It took '90s special effects technology to bring creatures of the often remade *Island of Dr. Moreau* to eerie perfection.

but because it's surely one of the loopy studio releases of last year. Gorgeously crafted and filled with big-name actors in half-baked roles, this third screen version of H. G. Wells's classic is a mess if you're looking for a serious adaptation. But if approached simply as a high-powered thrill ride, it's a fair amount of fun.

David Thewlis stars as a plane crash survivor in the Southern Pacific, who's rescued by Montgomery (Val Kilmer) and taken to a mysterious island compound. The head honcho is the unseen Dr. Moreau (Marlon Brando), a Nobel Prize-winning scientist turned recluse, who's spent the past two decades working on unorthodox gene-fusing research. Moreau's larger goal is to eventually eliminate the destructive elements in the human species, and while that's a nice sentiment, an

*"They invade our space, and we fall back.  
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*— Jean-Luc Picard*

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ABOVE: David Thewlis looks on in horror as he realizes the truth behind *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. BELOW: One of Stan Winston's remarkable half-man/half-animal make-up effects.

try to hide that fact. Plus, they have the perfect star in Lance Henriksen (*Millennium*), who's so intense he could bring a sense of urgency to a potato chip commercial.

In an abandoned, underground nuclear dump turned secret government lab, a team of scientists give a nearly deceased 'volunteer' an experimental virus — saving his life, but also using him as a guinea pig. And six months later, their science project goes wildly out of control. You see, this virus is supposed to promote molecular regeneration, but when one crazed team member increases the drug in order to speed up the results, the body disappears. From then on, it's a game of cat-and-mouse, with this out-of-control "super soldier" on the loose in the catacombs of the lab, and the government goons soon becoming its prey. Henriksen plays the original team leader, now retired, who's called back into service and takes a trio of teens with him, to add a few more potential victims to the roster. Essentially, it's a throwaway role for the guy (but everyone's got to pay the rent sometime, right?), and outside of one effective sequence with the creature (who recognizes Lance, and asks "Are you God?"), he could play this role in his sleep.

Although Craven's name graces the title, he was only the executive producer. Instead, this was director Joe Gayton's baby, and he keeps it zipping along, even if there isn't an original idea in sight. Along the way, he sprinkles in a few comments about the inhumanity of their project (as one scientist succinctly puts it, "Screw nature."), but primarily, this is

an *Alien*-style monster romp, with the humans (and not a particularly bright bunch, either), unable to escape their labyrinthine, high-tech facility, and the creature methodically ripping out their brains. Predictably dopey, it's a passable time killer and good for an evening's worth of low-grade thrills.

During his lengthy career, Roger Corman directed several movies that focus on humankind meddling with nature. But after a lengthy hiatus from the director's chair, he returned with *Roger Corman's Frankenstein Unbound* (CBS FOX). Based on Brian Aldiss's novel, the film was unjustifiably trashed

by the critics during its initial release, who were obviously too busy focusing at the hokier aspects to notice its more thought-provoking conceit.

John Hurt stars as a scientist in the year 2031, who has developed a destructive particle beam that he hopes will be the perfect weapon. Instead, when used, it opens up a rift in time, with Hurt and his futuristic talking car (shades of *Knight Rider!*) transported back to early 19th-century Geneva. It's there that he accidentally runs into a fellow doctor, Victor Frankenstein (Raul Julia), whose lumpy-faced creation is on the loose.

Along the way, Hurt also encounters a young, prepubescent Mary Shelley (a radiant Bridget Fonda), gives her a taste of her future fame, and is introduced to Lord Byron (Jason Patric) and husband-to-be Shelley (Michael Hutchence, from the band INXS). Hurt finally aids the crackpot Frankenstein in reanimating a woman, even as the entire film spins out of control — taking us on an icy wasteland and lading on a message how mankind will destroy itself in its pursuit of science over humanity.

Admittedly, this is far from a total success, and Aldiss fans will probably want to kick Corman down a flight of stairs. Although the story line has a refreshingly imaginative spin, much of it seems hokey (check out those cheesy matte paintings), unintentionally humorous (Hurt driving around the 1817 countryside in his sports car), or just plain unbelievable (Hurt's unlikely one-night-stand with Mary). Still, for a Corman project, this is opulent beyond words, with honest-to-goodness special effects, and an all-star cast giving it their all, even in the face of increasing idiocy.

Early in his career, director Tim Burton took a shot at the Frankenstein story in his half-hour short, *Frankenweenie* (Disney). Years before igniting box offices with *Batman*, Burton was the brainchild behind this brilliant homage, which mixes James Whale's classic with *Father Knows Best*. Initially, it was shelved by Disney, who felt the short was too intense for its intended G-rated audience. But when Burton emerged as a studio player in the '90s, they capitalized on his fame and gave this wonderful featurette a long-overdue release on video.

Shot in black and white, Barret Oliver stars as a young boy named Victor, whose dog Sparky is killed by a car in the opening minutes. But after watching his science teacher (Paul Bartel) demonstrate the effects of electricity on a dead frog, li'l Victor sets up a lab in his suburban attic, and late one night digs up Sparky and actually resur-



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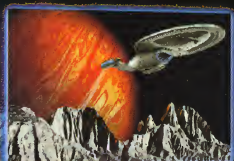
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*ABOVE: When scientist John Hurt travels through time in Frankenstein Unbound, he makes the acquaintance of creature creator Mary Shelly — but unfortunately also of the creature itself.*

rects his beloved pet.

Covered in crude stitches and (of course) metal bolts in his neck, Sparky isn't your ordinary pup, and Victor's typical sitcom parents (Shelley Duvall and Daniel Stern) are understandably shocked by Sparky's reappearance — but quickly learn to accept this undead canine. It's only when Sparky leaves the house and terrorizes the jumpy neighbors that the odd little dog is treated like a full-blown monster. It all culminates in a fiery finale set at a broken-down miniature golf course, complete with a hilltop windmill and a pack of angry villagers (who, instead of torches and pitchforks, brandish flashlights and croquet mallets).

On a purely technical level, this is a marvel. It begins with imaginative credits, set against pet cemetery tombstones; boasts gorgeously impressionistic sets; and is a loving tribute to the 1931 original, right down to the actual reanimation sequence — which turns everyday household materials into a makeshift laboratory. The cast is equally important, playing it with only the slightest tongue in cheek. Combined with Burton's obvious love for the material, this soon has us caring about Victor's quest, which is less an attempt to defy the laws of nature than to simply regain an old friend. All in all, a small gem of a movie, which works on every level and is one of Burton's most cohesive works.

Director Stuart Gordon and producer Brian Yuzna debuted on the horror/sci-fi scene with *Re-Animator* (Live), a blast of energy, imagination and grue. Based on a series of stories by H.P. Lovecraft, its script might not follow the original tales to the letter, but Gordon manages the more difficult task of transferring Lovecraft's twisted spirit to the screen. Armed with a pitch black swath of humor, we follow the brilliant (and, of course, thoroughly mad) Dr. Herbert West on his quest to conquer death.

Jeffrey Combs stars as West, the newest student at the Miskatonic Medical School, and he arrives with a tarnished reputation, since his old mentor was last seen with his eyeballs blown out of their sockets. Fascinated by West's (limited) success with his experimental reanimation formula, roommate Dan Cain (Bruce Abbott) helps West sneak into the school morgue and pump a corpse with the glowing serum. But unlike most Frankenstein-style creations, which slowly lumber about, West's subjects leap off the table like they've just chugged a bottle of Tabasco sauce. Following tradition, things soon spin out of control, with West on the look-out for ever-fresher corpses, and a rival physician out to steal West's work — only to end up decapitated and reanimated. Meanwhile, Cain's lovely fiancée, Meg (Barbara Crampton), gets the singular honor of being molested by a disembodied head.

Fast-paced, unpredictable and audacious, this is a rollercoaster ride of deliriously gruesome chills. And even the non-horrific sequences are sure make some viewers squeamish, like when a professor blithely pulls out a cadaver's brain. But at the forefront is Combs' deliciously creepy turn as West — taking the character to the precipice of self-satire, but always with a straight-face. So obsessed that he seems totally out of touch with reality (or simple tact), Combs set a new standard for all demented mad scientists to come.

Following their *Re-Animator*'s success, Gordon and Yuzna tackle another Lovecraft-based story, and emerged with *From Beyond* (Live), which (difficult to believe) was even more excessive tale of science-gone-wrong. Take one mad scientist, a few unsuspecting victims, a bizarre monster, an old mansion, and the result is an ecstatically goey tale about tampering with the unknown.

Jeffrey Combs and Barbara Crampton



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Director Stuart Gordon's wildly over-the-top *Re-Animator* showed that there were some things with which a scientist should not meddle, not if he wants to get ahead — and keep his head, too.

(reunited from *Re-Animator*) join forces with Ken Foree (the heroic lead from *Dawn of the Dead*) to tell the tale of Dr. Edward Preterious and his Resonator, a device that allows you to observe the creatures that inhabit other dimensions. Unfortunately, when you are able to see them, they're able to see you, and in the opening sequences Preterious has his head twisted off his body by these forces.

Now, Preterious's possibly mad assistant (Combs), a prim psychiatrist (Crampton), and a plainclothes cop (Foree), all head to the dead Doc's mansion to jump-start his old experiments. Little do they realize, the "vibrations" given off by the Resonator not only open up a dimensional rift, but enlarge the pineal gland and unleash the baser human instincts. Allowing their curiosity for the

unknown to take the forefront, each begins to transform. Soon, Combs is running around with a worm-like gland poking out of his forehead, and hungry for brains; Dr. Preterious emerges from his dimensional nap as half-man, half-monster; Crampton turns into a leather-lingered sexpot; while Ken Foree plays (relative) straight man to this weirdness.

The special effects are thoroughly over the top (although the most repulsive imagery was obviously clipped in order to get an R-rating in the U.S.), while Gordon crams the movie with slimy creatures and as much queasy bloodshed as he could conjure up. As usual, Gordon also brings a unique style to his work, while FX fans will go wild for its nonstop parade of monstrosities, including a giant worm in the cellar. Plus, Combs really knows how to play a madman (for current proof, check out his scene-stealing supporting role in *The Frighteners*). If you're in the mood for a disturbing trip into the truly bizarre, this definitely fits the bill.

Searching for the wackiest vision of man trying to be God? Look no further than *Freaked* (Fox Video) — a comedy that meshes Moreau's themes with a Mad Magazine-style, anything-goes humor. Co-directors Tom Stern and Alex Winter (best known for his spaced-out *Bill and Ted* persona) don't give you a moment to breathe, and despite the occasional misfire, this twisted tale of man-made freaks is truly inspired.

Winter stars as Ricky Coogin, a Holly-

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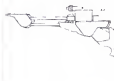
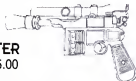
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ABOVE: Steve Johnson's bizarre make-up for the film *Freaky* was inspired by comic books.

wood brat-packer who journeys to the tiny country of Santa Flan as a spokesman for toxic Zygot-24 fertilizer. Accompanied by his best friend (Michael Stoyanov) and a pretty protester (*Dark Skies'* Megan Ward), they make a pit stop at a carry called Freak Land. But unbeknownst to them, its proprietor, Elijah C. Skuggs (Randy Quaid), not only houses these human oddities — he creates them in his lab, with the aid of the deadly Zygot-24.

Taken prisoner, Coogin's bickering companions are transformed into Siamese twins,

while Coogin is turned into a hunchbacked Beast Boy whose face makes people vomit. Then we meet the rest of Skuggs' menagerie, which includes Mr. T as a Bearded Lady, Bob Goldthwait as a Sock Puppet Man, and a furry Keanu Reeves as Dawgboy. But even after the grotesque Coogin wins over the locals with a scene from *Richard III*, Skuggs plans to change him into an "evil super-freak." If that weren't enough, the story features giant Rastafarian eyeball guards, a half-pint Coogin fan who looks like Alfred E. Newman's illegit son, and a brawl between two 10-foot-tall monstrosities. If memory serves me right, it's also the first movie to have a flashback from an inanimate object.

This pic has everything any vidiot could ask for — from its rude and crude sense of humor, to the deranged makeup from Steve Johnson and Screaming Mad George. The entire cast is terrific, and let's not forget David Daniels' crazed animated credits, which get your brain throbbing from the start. Last, but not least, Stern and Winter don't forget to tack on a sledgehammer 'message,' for one final raspberry. Low on subtlety, but high on laugh-out-loud insanity, this monstrosity is the perfect antidote to some of the more pretentious mad scientist sci-fiascos. □

## NEW ON VIDEO

**Honey, We Shrunk Ourselves:** Disney has decided to go direct to video with the third installment of this mad scientist series, so you won't be seeing this one in the theaters. This time nutty professor Wayne Salinski shrinks himself, his brother and their wives, who must survive the partying kids who don't know that their parents have turned tiny. Wayne Knight (*Seinfeld's* Newman) joins the cast.

**Infinity:** Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman was a true genius, the author of the best-selling biography *Who Cares What Other People Think?* and star of the Challenger disaster inquiry. Now he's also the subject of a biographical film, in which Matthew Broderick (who both directed and stars) plays out Feynman's true love story with a dying woman (Patricia Arquette).

**Escape From L.A.:** John Carpenter's cult classic *Escape From New York* sent Kurt Russell as antihero Snake Plissken into the prison of Manhattan Island to rescue a President. Now, a President's daughter colludes to steal a weapon that could destroy the world. Plissken must dodge tsunami surfers and mad plastic surgeons to survive.

**The Trigger Effect:** A young couple sees their dreams shatter as their perfect suburban world turns into a place of sudden danger after a massive power failure causes a complete breakdown of society. This psychological thriller stars Kyle MacLaughlin (*Dune*, *Twain Peaks*) and Elizabeth Shue (*Leaving Las Vegas*).

**The X-Files:** The tapes are out there. Six of the most popular episodes of this cult show's second season are on their way to your local video store — "Little Green Man," "The Host," "Sleepless," "Duana Barry," "Ascension," and "One Breath." Each cassette is packaged with two installments and features behind-the-scenes interviews with show creator Chris Carter.

**Leprechaun 4 In Space:** A popular (and campy) horror series has taken a turn into sci-fi. On a planet in a distant galaxy, a power-hungry leprechaun (Warwick Davis) holds a beautiful alien princess (Rebekah Carlton) captive. When an invading platoon of marines from Earth attempt a rescue, The Leprechaun wreaks havoc aboard the orbiting spaceship. Further proof that the spirit of Ed Wood still lives.



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**On the Internet and in CD-ROM games  
the Force is strong on your home computer.**

BY MELISSA J. PERENSON

Still jazzed after finally seeing the *Star Wars* Trilogy on the big screen? Help satisfy your appetite for all things *Star Wars* by logging on to the Internet, where you'll find an ample supply of Web sites for everyone from the ardent fan to the neophyte who's first discovering the difference between the Empire and the Rebellion. Prior to the last video release of the *Star Wars* Trilogy, Twentieth Century-Fox Home Entertainment

mounted a wide-scale publicity blitz that included what quickly became the definitive — not to mention the only officially sanctioned — *Star Wars* site on the Web. This site included episodic, video-enhanced story guides

a loss for *Star Wars* fans on the Web that Fox and Lucasfilm couldn't maintain sites in parallel, or that the Fox site couldn't be relocated and incorporated into the Lucasfilm location. Of course, that's not to say that the Lucasfilm site isn't worth a visit. In fact, this site is your best bet for finding out about the *Star Wars* Trilogy Special Edition, and soon, it will be the place to get the real scoop on the prequels — straight from the source, so to speak. Jon Bradley Snyder, editor of *Star Wars Insider* magazine, is contributing editorial coverage to the site, with the first report being live coverage of the *Star Wars* premiere at Mann's Village Theater in Westwood Village, California.

With sections titled Death Star, Dagobah, Hoth, and Tatooine, it's not immediately clear what each section houses. Visit Tatooine first to view the site map, which will simplify finding your way around the site and let you be sure you haven't missed anything. There's also a guide to what's been changed in the Special Edition, a page explaining just why there is a Special Edition, a history of the Trilogy, and an introduction to the creative teams at Lucasfilm Ltd., Skywalker Sound, and Industrial Light & Magic that brought the Special Edition to life. For the truly impatient, there's even a countdown clock ticking off the time first to the re-releases of the Trilogy, and eventually, to the first prequel. There are character profiles, but unfortunately, these pages are far less encompassing than the Fox site had to offer. In addition, you'll find a Macromedia Shockwave-based game, a handful of sound files, and links to *Star Wars* sites from Dark Horse Comics, Bantam Doubleday Dell, and other *Star Wars* licensees. In recognition of *Star*

Wars' new generation, there's a six-page downloadable coloring book for the young Jedi in your family.

Of course, Lucasfilm's site isn't the only game in town. And the advantage to visiting one of the thousands of fan-created, unofficial *Star Wars* sites is that you can get the kinds of things you'd never find at an officially sanctioned site.

For example, *The Ultimate*



Visiting the top Star Wars sites on the Internet is the next best thing to being a Jedi Knight. At right, the Star Wars Home Site. Below, Lucasfilm's Official Star Wars Trilogy web site.

introducing visitors to the *Star Wars* Trilogy, storyboards, extensive character profiles, props, and much, much more. The Fox site has since closed its doors to make way for Lucasfilm's Official *Star Wars* Trilogy Web site, conveniently located at <http://www.starwars.com>. The site tries to pick up where Fox left off, but comes no-where near the degree and quality of content that the stellar Fox site had contained; as an aside, it's



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Star Wars Links Page at <http://w3.one.net/~dread/starwars/main.html>, which offers links to 365 Web sites.

As you cybersurf the World Wide Web, don't forget to visit the Sci-Fi Channel's own site, The Dominion, at [www.scifi.com](http://www.scifi.com), which features Star Wars news, a guide to the best official and unofficial sites, and images from the Channel's recent letterboxed presentation of the original trilogy.

## Technology

Thinking about buying a multimedia computer? As if worrying about such abbreviations as MBs, RAM, and DSVD aren't enough, there's now one more such acronym thrown into the mix: MMX. The latest upgrade to the Pentium computer processor from industry-giant Intel, MMX Technology is designed to optimize your system's speed and performance when using multimedia applications, including games, the Internet, and video-conferencing. Plus, the quality and realism of your multimedia experience will be enhanced.

Targeted at the consumer market, the Pentium Processor with MMX Technology has two structural design improvements that set it apart from the previous generation of generic Pentium chips. MMX Technology boosts performance by reducing the number of times the CPU (central processing unit) is accessed. That's accomplished through the use of 57 new Pentium processor "instruction sets," which are basically instructions that the processor uses to direct the computer's actions. These new instructions are designed to take into account the parallel, repetitive sequences that multimedia applications tend to utilize, thereby handling video, audio, and graphical data with greater efficiency. Plus, the processor's cache has been doubled to 32K, which in turn also speeds the processor's response. Intel reports system performance gains of up to 20 percent over comparable, non-MMX processors.

If you're buying a new system, a Pentium with MMX Technology will prove a cost-effective benefit, as the price difference between these systems and non-MMX systems will be negligible. All of the major manufacturers—including Compaq, Dell, Gateway, IBM, Micron, NEC, and Packard Bell—are offering MMX Pentium systems; systems using MMX Technology with the Pentium Pro processor will be out shortly.

Although ordinary programs that are not enhanced for MMX Technology will improve their speed, in order to take full advantage of MMX technology you'll want to use software that's been optimized for use on MMX systems. A vast array of software is in devel-

opment, everything from games to image editors and MPEG video players. Some of the first programs out the gate include Eraser-Turnabout, Easy Photo, Adobe PhotoDeluxe, POD, Space Station Simulator, The



Two classic games in The Ultimate Collection: Star Crusader (left) and Millennia Altered Destinies (above).



Third Dimension, and The Timetables of Technology. Sega Entertainment's Virtual On 3-D action game is due later this year.

## Multimedia

The top-selling PC games during this past Christmas shopping season included: Microsoft's *Flight Simulator*, Virgin's *Command & Conquer Red Alert*, Broderbund's *Myst*, Electronic Arts' *Madden Football '97*, Davidson's *Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness*, Id Software's *Quake*, Formgen's *Duke Nukem 3D*, Microprose's *Civilization 2*, Disney's *Toy Story Power Play*, and Microprose's *Master of Orion II*. Just out of the top ten was LucasArts' *Archives II: Star Wars Collection*, at number 12.

Looking for a classic set of sci-fi games? Get SegaSoft's *Science Fiction: The Ultimate Collection*, a boxed set of six CD-ROM games. Included are: *Star Crusader* 3-D combat game in which you fly 13 starships; *Star Control I*, in which you save the galaxy from an evil alien empire; *Star Control II*, during which you're an explorer trying to free alien species and planets; *Spaceward Ho!*, a game of conquest and control and space exploration; *Iron Helix*, a 3-D adventure in which you control a robot probe; and *Millennia: Altered Destinies*, where you have the power to strategically travel through 10,000 years of space and time. As an added bonus, the collection includes a copy of Berkeley System's classic *Star Trek: The Next Generation* screen saver.

COMING UP: We'll take you through the world of Star Wars multimedia past and present, including a look at the 1997 releases from LucasArts—*Star Wars Rebellion*, a strategy game that makes you ruler of the Empire or Alliance; *Jedi Knight*, a sequel to *Dark Forces*; and *X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter*, possibly the penultimate multiplayer simulation game yet. □



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**T**HERE ARE MANY ACTORS IN Hollywood, but few possess the chameleon-like versatility that's become synonymous with the name Brent Spiner. After nearly ten years spent portraying *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* Lt. Commander Data, you'd expect to see some evidence of Spiner's android alter ego surface; after all, even co-star Patrick Stewart admits that Captain Picard has become inextricable from, and intertwined with, himself.

But, clearly, that's not the case with Spiner. Taking a break from a gruelling day of interviews, Spiner appears relaxed and unfazed by it all. There's no sign of Data any-

where in the room, with the exception of his image staring back from a *First Contact* chocolate bar. As he relaxes in a posh Beverly Hills hotel suite, Spiner seems about as far removed from his Data persona as possible, from his mannerisms and speech to his casual black jeans, t-



shirt, and blazer ensemble to the hints of gray in his hair.

Still, there are some things that haven't changed. "It's not any different," Spiner remarks of doing the *Trek* films versus the series. "It's the same. You still play the character the same way. Except that we have better hours. Actually, we work the same hours," Spiner corrects himself, "we just don't have to

# BEYOND DATA

BY MELISSA J. PERENSON

*Brent Spiner chats with Sci-Fi Entertainment  
about life after Star Trek.*



**BELOW:** Not content with his bravura performance as Lt. Commander Data, Brent Spiner also portrayed Data's evil twin Lore, shown here conspiring with the Borg. **INSET:** Spiner was nearly unrecognizable as Dr. Okun in last summer's *Star Trek: First Contact*, a role which he hopes to repeat in the sequel.



BELOW: In *Star Trek: First Contact*, Spiner enjoyed the nuances of characterization allowed by Data's newly implanted emotion chip. LEFT: In *The Outer Limits* episode "The Deprogrammers," Spiner tackled a different flavor of sci-fi.



accomplish as much in a day. We were shooting ten pages a day on the series; in the feature, if you get two pages you're lucky."

For Spiner, the *Next Generation*'s move to the big screen has provided an opportunity to take Data to the next level. "It's a more leisurely pace. You have an opportunity for more angles and more exploration and experimentation. On the films, we have more freedom to collaborate [with the writers]. They sort of set the blueprint, and then we finesse [the story] together. I have no idea what they have in mind for the next film, if there is a next one," admits Spiner. "But, I've been pretty comfortable with where the writers have taken me."

Data was actually the first bonafide "breakout" character of *Next Generation*'s ensemble cast. And that's not just because he's the only android in *Starfleet*. It was soon after *Next Generation*'s debut that the inevitable comparisons between the new series and its legendary predecessor began surfacing. In particular, viewers immediately noticed the similarities and parallels between Spiner's Data and Leonard Nimoy's Spock. The latter, of course, needs no introduction: As Captain James T. Kirk's ever-logical half-human, half-Vulcan first officer, Spock handily became an audience favorite and icon who's instinctively identified with the original *Star Trek* series. History has repeated itself, because the same can now be said of Data, who's arguably the most popular character on the *Next Generation* (perhaps second only to the formidable Captain Picard).

When Gene Roddenberry created the character of Data, it soon became obvious that Roddenberry had hit another home run. The golden-skinned android's unique combination of childlike curiosity, super-human skills, and burning quest to become more human was an immediate hit with viewers. That alone is a credit to Spiner's versatility as an actor, as he deftly circumvented the constraints of playing an android who, up until recently, was devoid of emotion, to create a Data who was both personable and appealing to audiences. Not to mention having appeared in several episodes in the dual roles of Data and his evil brother, Lore; once, in the the tour-de-force fourth season







**T**he Next Generation crew invaded Sherwood Forest (TOP) in the Q-generated scenario episode, "QPid." ABOVE: Data made his farewell to television before moving on to the movies in the final episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "All Good Things..." RIGHT: In the crew-melding *Star Trek: Generations*, Data first stepped onto the big screen, shown here with LeVar Burton and Whoopie Goldberg. FAR RIGHT:

Though Lt. Commander Data has become what may be fiction's most beloved android, Spiner admits that when he auditioned for the role, "to tell you the truth, I didn't even know what an android was!" TOP RIGHT: Spiner took on another chameleon-like role in *Phenomenon*, in which he starred with John Travolta.

episode "Brothers." Spiner even simultaneously played Data, Lore, and the creator of them both — Dr. Noonian Soong.

Although all of the *Next Generation* characters have subtly evolved in some way or another over the course of *Next Generation*, Data is clearly the character that's most changed. "I think it's been an evolution from day one, actually," says Spiner thoughtfully. "If you look at the fifth, sixth, seventh season of the show as compared to the first season, there's a real difference in Data. We always

related to him as kind of a learning machine. That he was growing as he coexisted with humans, that he was picking up the nuances of humanity even though he wasn't emotionally attached. That he was still becoming easier and more human as time had gone on. It was Roddenberry's idea from the very beginning that [Data] would be a blank tablet, and by the end, whenever that is, that he would be as close to being a human as possible, and still not be there."

In the last film, the writers took Data into

completely new territory by introducing the emotion chip, which allows Data to experience human emotions. Unlike his co-stars, who are familiar with their respective characters, Spiner is first discovering new depths for Data. "I felt in the first film that the emotion chip had one purpose. Data's relationship with the emotion chip was like a child. He was out of control, he had no idea how to handle it. He was completely off the wall with his emotions. And my hope was that he would have two years to learn how to deal with them, and the next time you saw him, he would still have the chip, but he would have more control over the chip than it had over him. And I think it is sort of going in this direction. In this film, not only is Data able to turn the chip on and off at will, but he actually is able to use the emotion to his advantage."

Spiner cites Data's encounter with the Borg Queen as being a prime example of the character's newly-developed handle on his emotions, noting that the circumstances are very different from the infamous liaison between Data and Lt. Yar in the series first episode, "The Naked Now." "I think this is a real exploration on his part, because on the TV series he was under the influence of some kind of virus. But I think it's a critical moment in the film, really. It's purely necessity. She suggests it, and it becomes a service." He pauses, preparing to clear up any confusion about just how far the Borg Queen and Data actually went. "When



they go away after that scene, I did want a scene when they came back and I was going [big grin] and she was like, smoking a cigarette, you know [laughs all around]."

Unlike some of his *Trek* co-stars, Spiner has not made a conscious effort to avoid doing science fiction. "I never really thought about it. When I went in for *Independence Day*, I was really dumb; I thought it was a comedy," he laughs. "And you know what? I think so did the writer [Dean Devlin] and the director [Roland Emmerich]. I mean, I

don't think they ever took it very seriously. I think they thought they were making a comic book. It was there just to be enjoyed. One of the reviews for *Independence Day* said this is the best movie a 12-year-old boy is ever going to see. And I think that was [Devlin and Emmerich's] intention, to make a film that appealed to the 12-year-old boy in everybody. It wasn't really a serious film. Although it was science fiction. I kind of thought, 'I wish it wasn't science fiction,' but I liked it and I thought it was a really fun part. It was very different from what I'd done before, so why not?" Spiner, who made a sensational splash as the over-the-top Dr. Okun in *ID4*, hasn't ruled out appearing in a sequel, assuming there is an *ID4* sequel and that his character manages to have survived somehow.

Then again, in some ways Spiner never really had to fear being typecast in sci-fi roles, and not just because of Data's android make-up. After all, Spiner's pre-*Star Trek* resume is full of stage, screen, and television credits. The Houston, Texas born-actor performed in over 20 plays on the Broadway and Off-Broadway stage before moving out to Los Angeles in 1984. Over the years, Spiner has guest-starred on *Hill Street Blues*, *Cheers*, *Night Court* (in which he appeared in six episodes), *Twilight Zone*, *Dream On*, and *Mad About You*.

Spiner recognizes that he's had good fortunes since *Next Generation*'s conclusion in 1994. In addition to roles in *ID4* and *Phenomenon*, Spiner has, among other things, appeared in the film *Pie in the Sky* and guest-starred on *The Outer Limits* ("The Deprogrammers"), lent his voice to the CD-ROM adventure game *Chronomaster*, and performed on stage in Chicago in *The Snarkout Boys* and *The Avocado of Death*.

"I really have," he agrees. "I thought it was lucky to get the role in *Independence Day*, because it was so vastly different than what

Continued on page 96



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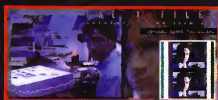


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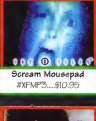
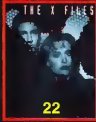


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# SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SCI-FI CHANNEL



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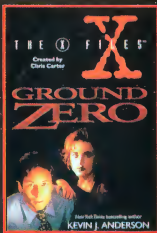
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*Pay a behind-the-scenes visit to  
The X-Files to discover how special  
effects wizards trick your senses ...*

BY DR. CRAIG REED



**A**fter my fourth pass on Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena, California, I had just about given up hope of finding what was described to me as "a smallish, gray wooden

building away from the road."

Pulling into a parking lot and still unsure of my bearings, I noticed an interesting warning sign. In bright red letters it read, "NO TRESPASSING." In white letters the remainder of the warning stated, "AREA 51, TOP SECRET RESEARCH FACILITY," followed by smaller print that read, "Violators will vanish without a trace." When I turned

**THE  
X  
Are Out  
There**





*BELOW: Fox Mulder (David Duchovny), Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) are dedicated to finding out whether what's out there is truth — or fantasy. INSET: Mrs. Peacock's three sons in "Home" were a challenge for special effects makeup supervisor Toby Lindala.*



ABOVE: Makeup artists ply their craft on the unfortunate subject of plastic surgery gone awry. RIGHT: Actor Richard Baymer, seen with FX supervisor Toby Lindala, played a deranged plastic surgeon who turned the knife on himself. OPPOSITE: Sometimes effects are not meant to be noticed, as stunt coordinator Tony Morelli explains about the action in "Unrue."

around a man approached me, saying, "Hi, I'm Glenn Campbell." No, it wasn't the singer, but the similarly named visual effects supervisor for the hottest show on television, *The X-Files*.

"And there is another Glenn Campbell associated with Area 51," Campbell mused, "a fellow who writes about Area 51 and gives unauthorized tours and details of what he suspects goes on there. When I was working on *Space: Above and Beyond* he found out about me, and when we met, I felt that we were going to cancel each other out or something. The scary thing is that we have many similarities. What are the odds?"

Similar to the electric relationship between *X-Files*' FBI Special Agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson), Los Angeles-based Campbell works closely with the show's Vancouver-based special effects makeup supervisor, Toby Lindala, to create the series' often unflinching and graphic approach to depicting surreal images of suspense. Campbell quips, "That is how it works — we are trying to be homogenous. You don't look at our works and say: 'This is live action, or makeup stuff, or computer stuff.' We are never supposed to know. The only way to do that is to have everyone sit down, and work on the same page.

"For example, when we were working on one particular episode, we first had a conference where they wanted us to have these bizarre alien worms coming out of the soil chamber, up people's legs, burrow under the skin and paralyze them. There was all this discussion, and our animal wrangler first got these various bugs — centipedes and planarians and leechy things and anything that could be gotten for us to look at. We'd say, 'Yes, we like this and not that.' Then Toby looks at it and tries to duplicate it. Then I try to duplicate it on the computer. So all of us by



phone work with Chris Carter saying, 'Let's try this, and if that works, then we can make variations thereof.'

"For one scene, they are supposed to have the worms go inside someone's mouth. Now I can do that, but it is more difficult for me if the actors are thrashing all around, and also based on how much time and money is allotted. On the other hand, Toby can say, 'I can make this cast of the actor and I could actually pull them out with wires, wiggle them around and do stuff like that.' So basically there is no competition. It's like always looking for the fastest and best way to do something. The point is we don't create the shots, but solve the problems."

Campbell, an avid lover of Ray Harryhausen films, moved at age 12 from New Jersey to Los Angeles. After he realized that there might be a career in the future doing special effects, he got a Super-8 camera and started experimenting.

"I was just a kid," reminisced Campbell, "but I started sculpting things, and animating them in the basement, and building models, and blowing them up with firecrackers. Then you meet other people who do it. The next thing you know you are a full-blown nerd in school. I didn't go to school to learn about effects, I just picked it up. I went to Hollywood High, and people like Jim Danforth and Dave Allen were working literally down the street at Cascade doing stuff like the Pillsbury Doughboy and Mrs. Butterworth. So after school I would go there, hang out and ask questions. They could have just said, 'Why are we teaching this kid stuff when he could take jobs from us?' I knew people like Dennis Murin, Phil Tippet and Ken Raltson. They were very gracious and I was very fortunate."

After the success of *Star Wars* in 1977, everybody wanted to make *Star Wars* type films, but at the time there were only a handful of professionals

who could do those kinds of special effects. Up until that time, the Cameron Training Program would each year churn out camera personnel who were only equipped for the non-FX-oriented films prevalent at that time. After *Star Wars*, Campbell and Area 51 founder Tim McHugh and three others were five of 1,200 applicants who were accepted into the inaugural special effects program. After successfully completing the program, Campbell's path toward *The X-Files* truly began.

"After the program, Tim and I were first assigned to work with Howard Anderson on *Superman*. Bob Bailey was one of the other five who made it. Bob, Tim and I worked on *Buck Rogers*, *Dreamquest*, and *Viper* together. After going our separate ways for a few years, one day when I was working on

*Johnny Pneumonic*, Tim, who had already founded Area 51, asked me if I wanted to work on *Space: Above and Beyond*. I wasn't too sure, but when he said that it was being done by the same people who were doing *X-Files* I said, 'I'm there.' I've been here ever since. Although *Space* didn't survive, Fox realized that we had a really hot special effects team, so when the original visual effects supervisor Mat Beck moved on to work on the film *Volcano*, he recommended us to Chris Carter."

When asked whether his arrival on the scene was going to presage a new beginning for *The X-Files*, Campbell quickly quips, "No. Chris Carter's vision is the vision. We are not there to say, 'You know Chris, you never took the show far enough—let's make this a special effects show.' Everything gets filtered

through Chris and his team."

The contradictions of Campbell's job are intriguing ones. Not only does he spend endless hours designing visual effects that flit by in mere moments on the screen, but also, the better his work the less likely that anyone will ever realize that they have just witnessed one of his subliminal effects. However, sometimes the visual impact of a subtle CGI beast can disturb us deeply in its service to the plot. Campbell illuminates further about his efforts behind the "wormy things."

"There were two approaches," explains Campbell. "The worms on the surface and the subcutaneous worms. The surface worms were made by Scott Wheeler and Justin Hammond, and they were essentially little CGI objects. Scott made a series of



**BELOW:** Visual effects supervisor Glenn Campbell worked carefully with the cameraman to create the shapeshifting illusions in "Teliko." **OPPOSITE:** It took both Lindala and Campbell to fulfill Chris Carter's commands to "scare people's pants off" in "Home."

morph objects so they could resolve out of the oily fluid and appear to manifest themselves as worms coming out of the oily substance. That worked extremely well. A handful of modifications were done in postproduction by Paul Rabland and Lori Jo Nimhauser. We provided the alpha channel, so by having the individual elements the producer Frank Spotnicks could pretty much put the worms where he wanted."

To clarify the basics of FX editing, an alpha channel is the electronic equivalent of a holdout mat. To composite a worm over a person's face, you would have to use an optical printer with a background plate of the actor. In order to take the worm, which was shot separately, and make it look as if it was on the actor instead of being double-exposed on top of the actor, one would make a black silhouette of the worm. That silhouette is called the mat. So on an optical printer, you would see a person with a black silhouette on the face. The silhouette prevents the light

from reaching the film, which means that the black area is unexposed so that an image can still be put in there later. Next, a counter mat is created, a black screen with a white silhouette of the worm, where that white shadow is actually a hole. That second counter mat prevents the original exposure of the actor to be double-exposed so light can reach the person. This little hole permits one to take the footage of the worm and insert it into the black silhouette like a jigsaw puzzle piece. If done correctly you get a composite of the person and the worm. However, sometimes in old movies (and new) when you see someone flying, you can see a line around the actor. That is a mat line, the black silhouette. The actor isn't fitting within the black silhouette because there is more black silhouette than there is actor. So an alpha channel allows one to apply the jigsaw piece mentality and punch a hole on the video. If it is all done on computer, then the mat line is eliminated completely.

"We do all the alpha channel stuff on computer," Campbell continues. "Just as an aside, the nice thing about alpha channels is that you can use them to create artificial shadows."

"Anyway, there were never any real worms on the face. There was one shot of a worm on a shoe. Some of them were rubber worms, and the one going up his pantleg was CGI. For the most part, you couldn't tell, because there

was so much activity going on that you saw enough worms that were physically moving to draw your eyes toward what needed to be done. We also gave them about three to four different versions of intensity on the look of the worms, which was really based on how far the worms would be poking out of the skin. It was subtle. There was a degree in which it really didn't look like it was under the skin. It almost looked like a solid worm sort of resting on the skin, but flesh-colored. Then there were others that were so subtle that you barely saw the skin pucker. The effect looked pretty good, and was actually quite disturbing."

As we head downstairs, to meet Scott Wheeler and Justin Hammond, Campbell explains to me that the most difficult episode they have tackled so far was the fourth-season opener, which featured thousands of battle-ready buzzing bees.

"Those were all CGI bees," explained Campbell. "It's the most difficult stuff we've done during our tenure on the show. The guys who did that were Scott and Justin, whom you are about to meet. On the set they originally intended to use several thousand stingless bee drones. They would fly around, give the atmosphere of heavy duty bees, and no one would get hurt. But when the bees





were released, the director of photography and the little girl got stung. So then I was asked, 'Can you fake it?' Originally they only had five attack shots — real bees in the apiary while they were doing dialogue, and CGI bees attacking the bounty hunter. Well, none of the real bees worked, so it went to 40-45 shots. So we put in the CGI bees, POV shots, hand-held shots, people walking around as they are doing their Shakespeare. If the bees are in the air, they are all CGI bees."

Scott Wheeler flicks on the computer, and with Justin Hammond shows me the steps taken to put the bees together. Wheeler whips out a book on bugs, flashing a detailed closeup of a honeybee.

"This was our model for the high-resolution bee," says Wheeler. A few clicks later, I am looking at a wire frame model of a VR bee being viewed from many planes of sight. "This was our first model, then eventually we developed this," he says, flashing on an image of a virtual bee composed of three ellipsoid circles without wings. "These three shapes represent the bee's abdomen, thorax and head. This bee we used for our low-resolution bee and for all those thousands of bees zipping here and there. Because they moved so fast on screen, you can't tell that it is just a bunch of circles. For the actual close-ups of the bee we used this high-resolution bee," he says, punching the keyboard so that a picture-perfect computerized model bee appears. "This was our photo-real bee."



and maybe that would work. We released a box of bees. The bees were too small and fast and we could see nothing. Although worthless, we at least saw how real bees flew. So Scott built that photo-real bee, and by looking at the footage we could see how the bees flew in certain patterns. They did things like helicoptering — it looked like how a hummingbird would wing in, stop for a second, then flit away again. So we could use this information and have our CGI bees do the same movements."

We watch the screen as the bees multiply before our eyes and begin their repertoire of stereotypical bee behavioral flight patterns. But that was not all that the team did for the opening episode. In fact, it was but the first of those effects that you should never know occurred.

"We also did these clone shots of the kids," continues Campbell. "We only had one pair of twins, so we did various cuts where we multiplied them up to three and five kids. That was fun. We also did a motion-control shot, an invisible shot, the kind of shot that this stuff is really for — not doing spaceship visual effects. Trick photography really saves the studio money and can save time putting up something that you couldn't have time to shoot. It can also save lives."

"A perfect example was when the guy falls off the telephone pole. He falls towards camera, then on the immediate following shot he is seen rolling over onto his back, and the camera cranes up to reveal one of the kids walking in toward his body. That shot should have been done on the set but for whatever reason it wasn't. However, at editing they discovered they needed it. So instead of the expense of flying back to Kamloops (a rural

area in Canada) with crew and actor and hoping the daylight matched, the guy and the kid were shot against a green screen. The only problem was that we didn't have any background. But as it happened, when we did the clone shot of the kids we had clean footage of the background behind the kids for the parts where they were being moved to different locations. Meaning, when we shot kids one and two, we had space for kids three, four, and five."

"So we used the clean area, grabbed a still frame, and basically rock and rolled it, put film grain over and used it as a background plate for this green screen. We also had to figure out the perspective and match the lighting. Basically we built this shot and it worked. A keen eye may note something isn't right — the background isn't moving properly in perspective, it should have gone further south — but we didn't have any more room left, the plate wasn't designed for it. I moved the plate down as far south as I could before the top of the frame started coming into frame. We crossed our fingers and said, 'This kind of works,' and so far no one has caught it."

Although many of Campbell's visual effects are conceived to be intentionally inconspicuous, sometimes they must be blatantly obvious, such as when it serves the purpose to reveal something special about a character or an event. In an episode called "Teleco," a demonic apparition (or according to Scully, just a man with a glandular condition) steals melanin from black men, leaving them as decrepit albino corpses. He also has the innate ability to squeeze himself into tiny areas, including a tray warmer drawer of a hospital food cart, a shot created over the phone.

"The bees had to be photo-real, and undetectable," Campbell interjects. "No one should look at that sequence and think, 'Oh man, they look so phony.' The moment you think they are fake, then there is no danger, no suspense, and no point to the sequence, because there is no threat. So then the concept was to shoot some real bees in front of a green screen — maybe we could just composite them into the scene

# Books From Beyond

Star Wars novelist Kevin J. Anderson teams up with Scully and Mulder to make book on The X-Files.

Sometimes, instant success requires you to think fast on your feet and reconsider old plans. The producers of *The X-Files* found this out when their show first began to take off into its current status-pheric heights, and old marketing schemes no longer sufficed. As with almost all Hollywood SF these days, the X-folks wanted to release some sort of hardprint companion volumes to accompany their show. Two novels were commissioned from noted horror and SF writer Charles Grant: *The X-Files* and *Goblins*. Issued by HarperCollins nearly simultaneously with the debut of the show, they sold faster than anticipated, causing all parties to rethink the size of their audience and exactly which author might best reach and entertain that eager horde.

Chris Carter, familiar with the *Star Wars* spinoffs written by Kevin J. Anderson, felt that Anderson was their man. The decision to hire him and effectively relaunch the tie-ins with HarperCollins seems to have been an inspired one, based on the reception for books three and four: *Ground Zero* and *Ruins*. The former quickly became a Number One best-seller on the charts of *The London Times*, and was voted by the readers of the British magazine *SFX* as the best science fiction novel of any for its year of publication.

Anderson is thrilled to be writing these books. Shuttling between his action-oriented *Star Wars* books, his cerebral non-



media SF, and the X-Files novels insures that he never grows bored with doing the same thing continuously! He relishes creating the (as he puts it) "strange atmosphere and weird shadowy moodiness" of the Scully and Mulder tales, where "so much depends on people just talking." Keeping abreast of the latest conspiracy theories and sharpening his paranoia-antennae through Internet browsing is fun, too.

Anderson is grateful also that the producers of the show allowed him to construct completely original scenarios for the paranormal patrol of Mulder and Scully. Neither of his books replicates plots from the TV series. In

*Ground Zero*, the agents must deal with "atomic bomb ghosts coming back to kill nuclear researchers," in the varied settings of Los Alamos and the South Pacific. *Ruins* find the

duo in Central America, dealing with spooky Mayan and Aztec relics. (Anderson was quite happy to visit the Yucatan for research, holing up in the spartan village of Cancun to write parts of the book.) Anderson feels that the medium of print allows him to write expansively, creating what would translate into "ninety-million-dollar movies." Needless to say, Anderson's tales would be hard to translate into teleplays without extensive cutting, and there are no plans to make them into episodes.

Anderson has already contracted to do the fifth book in the series, as yet untitled and nebulous in plot. But we can rest assured that it will further flesh out our daring investigators, sending them into exotic locales of ancient evil where actual camera crews might never dare penetrate! ■



"He is trying to escape from a hospital, so he squeezes him-self into this drawer," says Campbell. "We see

an orderly leave the cart in the hallway, and as the camera moves down the cart it holds on the warmer tray, which opens up to reveal a live human head looking around inside the tray warmer. We discussed the shot, and I designed it over the phone. I told the director to do whatever he wants prior to the reveal, then move into this thing and lock-off the camera — move in and stop. He needed to take measurements on the height, width, and the camera angle, the tile and the whole bit, and open up the cart door any way that he wanted, and leave it at that. Then shoot the actor in the same position so I can mat him into the little window that is revealed when the cart is opened. They did a wonderful job — did a little light gag so that his face looked like he was being revealed by the door opening up. It worked great."

Amid the peaceful, serene landscape that most Americans associate with Vancouver, British Columbia, lurks yet another special effects wizard, who in the spirit of *The X-Files* may not really be who he seems to be. Special effects makeup supervisor Toby Lindala is the master of a domain littered with aliens, mutant beings and whatever else must be created to surreally bludgeon the audience into a true sense of paranoid insecurity.

"I started doing this kind of stuff when I was 10, playing around with it at Halloween. Then I got more seriously into it and started collecting magazines like *Fangoria* and *Famous Monsters*."

Lindala was brought onto the show during the early part of the first season, and recalled for us some of the earlier works on the show.

"On one show, Doug Morrow and I worked on the shape-shifting werewolf. We made a transformation piece for the hand, and did that floating hand fur gag. Although it wasn't seen in the show, we made a neat sort of transformation prosthetic for the actor who was going through the change, but they cut it out

because it wasn't really seen in the light."

We fondly recalled one of our favorite effects, involving gargoyles that a serial killer sculpted in order to ward off an evil demon that he felt was responsible for his killing ways.

"Ah yes, the gargoyles," recalled Lindala. "Well, it was actually us who designed and created all the different gargoyles for the different sets. That architectural Grotesque was the one that moved into different places. Then we made 15 gargoyle sculptures and partial sculptures for where the madman had encased the bodies, then we made the bodies that went inside of them, of course. It was an extensive procedure starting off by making a small sculptural maquette — a miniature, eight-inch version of the final actual gargoyle. Then we sculpted a whole body, molded the torso into one piece as a two-piece fiber glass mold, and the legs in another two-piece fiber glass mold, then the

mouth, it really looked great. Then we made a vacu-form for the healing stages. We built that for him right with the pressure mask that burn victims wear, then did some after-scarring for the final stages of his face. It took us two hours to do the makeup job and three hours to put on the stumps, but the final look and effect was marvelous."

Although the deliciously creepy effect of those ink-clouding eyes from "Piper Maru" and "Apocrypha" were conceived by Dave Gauthier and Mat Beck, Lindala pulled off the sloppy oil creatures leaking out of their hosts, first in black and white and then in full-blown, screaming color.

"In 'Piper Maru,' we had the stuff coming out of Captain Stanford in a black and white sequence in the submarine. What is most memorable about that is that the head of Stanford was probably the most beautiful head that we have made to date. It was made from skin flex, a translucent urethane, and it



head in a two piece mold with silicone. It took about three weeks, which was great because usually we only get a week to get that stuff done."

Then there was the nightmare image of the man who submerged himself into boiling water.

"That was Don Thompson. We started him with some construction makeup, which worked quite nicely, particularly on the water, because we did a lot of work with gelatin and latex so they would actually separate from the skin when he was in the water. It was great because the latex took on that real blurr look as if the skin had blistered off. It took on that very pale translucent quality. And he took a drag of that cigarette and a glass of some spring water, then came out and said, 'You won't let me die,' and as he said that, when the smoke came out of his

*The bees you remember from fourth season opener "Herrenvolk," which featured guest-star Roy Thinnes, were added after the fact in the form of Computer Graphics Imagery, which is why this photo may not match your memory.*

was covered completely in tryptophane. Only the torso half was made. The production manager came on to the set and looked underneath the stage. When he couldn't see the legs he said, 'What is going on here?' It was that believable. It is easier to sell the separation with the oil in black and white.

"But in the conclusion of the story in the next episode the melting of Krycek's face

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# The Mars-Files

*How Topps turned it's Mars Attacks! comic book success into an X-Files goldmine.*

Leave it to Topps Comics, the people who brought us the *Mars Attacks!* trading cards and comic, to be inescapably drawn to the subject of *The X-Files*. Such a show fits neatly into their patented portrayal of a universe gone wildly awry. True, some of the more subtle, one-on-one terrors met by Scully and Mulder are miles away from the blatant chaos of a Martian invasion. But ancient, world-girdling conspiracies are plainly akin in spirit to invasion from outside our globe, and of course *The X-Files* doesn't exactly shy away from literal aliens either.

But while in hindsight it seems a match made in heaven, the path to a union between Fox and Topps was not always obvious. Let's listen to writer Stefan Petrucha explain how it came to be.

"One might think that [based on my previous work] I was



'predisposed' to watching *The X-Files* premiere on Fox.... In the end, I caught it almost by accident and as the show proceeded, I found myself intrigued by the characters, impressed with the atmosphere and the pacing. By the second or third episode I was convinced of two things: First, Fox had some quality TV on its hands, and second, *The X-Files* would make a great comic book. I made a quick phone call to my old pal Jim Salicrup, and suggested, in highly excited tones, that Topps should acquire the rights and I should write the comic books. In the end, Topps won out [over the competition] because, to quote Fox, '[Topps] offered the best package and the most enthusiasm.'"

That talent and enthusiasm went on display in January 1995 for all to see, with issue number one of

*The X-Files* comic. With its evocative, collage-style, photo-realistic cover by Miran Kim, its enigmatic, witty script by Petrucha and rich interior art by Charles Adlard (aided and abetted by letterer John Workman and colorist George Freeman), the series was off to a fine start. Mixing grimly realistic panels with what amounted to high-budget special effects shots, alternating between panoramic tableaux (a descending UFO, a radiating saintly apparition) and closeups of the flatteringly rendered protagonists, the comic staked out a unique territory for itself somewhere between Frank Miller and Charles Burns.

Fans responded by buying up the issue in bundles, sending the comic back for multiple printings: a rarity in the industry. Subsequently, the ride to the top has continued apace, culminating in another first: guest appearances of the two-dimensional Mulder and Scully in the pages of *TV Guide*, with its audience of millions.

Topps is not content to let the monthly title carry the whole weight, however. Their newest plans include having author Kevin Anderson convert his best-selling *X-Files* novels (*Ruins* and *Ground Zero*) into four-issue graphic novel format.

Could the first issue of *The X-Files* comic some day be a collectible on a par with the first issue of *Action Comics*? Maybe. But as Petrucha reminds us, "When it comes to the most important issues, life, death, morality, the future, we never really know, do we?" ■

Paul Di Filippo



Behind the masks of the aliens in "Jose Chung's 'From Outer Space'" (RIGHT and BELOW) are some of the make-up artisans who seek each week to make the impossible seem real.

was neat. We cast his face in the screaming position and the straight position, then duplicated the screaming face onto the straight face, and made a negative mold of that so we could make a latex mask that could fit on top of his own face. This was a copy of his face which left a half-inch space around his face so we had room to run five hoses of a pressure pot with this oil that came out each eye, both nostrils, and one out of the mouth. We originally had a lot of this stuff coming out. It had a beautiful look. The oil congealed so nicely that it maintained its own sort of entity, but the effect had to be toned down quite a bit."

And what about the hidden aliens at the heart of the show that are the causal inspirational premise for *The X-Files*' existence? "They are just pull-over masks. Over the years we have done at least seven different head designs for the different hybrids of aliens. Some are mechanical."

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the one show that featured the most aliens in one sitting was "731," which showed soldiers rounding-up and massacring pajama-clad prisoners, which conjured up subconscious images of other familiar genocidal points in history. "In that show," Lindala recalls, "we had four to five days to produce 25 pull over heads and glove extensions, as well as 25 bodies to fill the pit. They all got

shot and piled on top of each other, so that was a total of 50 in the pit. It was insane. It was four to five days that we were just dreading. There were just bodies everywhere. If you had come here you would think that there was something more serious than the Roswell cover-up going on here. So we pulled up a lot of the old stuff that we had done for the earlier episodes 'Duane Barry' and 'Paperclip,' and painted them into that flesh tone of these hybrids for that alien grave."

Probably the most harrowing gag Lindala has tackled was his creation of his now-classic Flukeman character, but his proudest and most fun moments were putting together the alien Lord Kinbott and the little alien followers in "Jose Chung's 'From Outer Space.'"

"Creating the Flukeman costume was definitely the most challenging, just because of the sheer scheduling constraints. We managed to pull it off, thank God, but we built the whole thing in 10 days. Doing Jose Chung was a blast. It was really a funny episode for us. We came up with these weird designs and dressed up our own guys in the suits. We just had head pieces on and had extended fingers for the long alien hands. The prosthetic gloves came up to their elbows, then the rest of it was just body paint. We had bicycle shorts that we blended into their bodies and were really happy with how the design created this optical illusion where the aliens actually looked smaller, because we had these large heads and large hands on them to throw off their body proportions. They were all quite small guys, being skinny makeup geek types — just kidding. You can print that; they are all proud of that. In fact, three of the main guys from the job here, Doug Morrow, Michael Fields, and Chris Waddell, wore the alien suits."

But the muscle-bound Lord Kinbott makeup effects were reserved for *The X-Files*' stunt coordinator, Tony Morelli. Former World Karate Champion Morelli recalls the long day and peculiar costume.

"I remember Toby came up to me and asked if I wanted to be the double who goes into this weird suit," Morelli told us. "I said, 'Sure.' I knew it was going to be

some kind of history-making show, and it did really well. He got these stunts together. I spent about two weeks trying to perfect these stunts. They were about two-and-a-half-feet tall and it was kind of like walking around on my tippy toes with my heels up. I got to the set at four in the afternoon, got into costume, and I think it was like 11 hours in the suit. I didn't eat, drink, or go to the bathroom. There was no way out, that would have been time-consuming, so I bit the bullet and did everything



*When it Snows, it rocks, as X-Files composer Mark Snow's haunting melodies prove.*

If you were to combine the surging triumphalism and exuberance of John Williams' film scores with the darkly moody and evocative work of Alfred Hitchcock's musical collaborator Bernard Herrmann (who also scored such SF gems as *The Day the Earth Stood Still*), then season the whole sonic stew with the up-to-the-minute Gothic stylings of Enigma, you might very well end up with a tasty mix similar to what listeners of *The X-Files* enjoy each week. Thanks to an amazing synergy among the talents of composer Mark Snow, musical editor Jeff Charbonneau, and head creative honcho Chris Carter, fans of the hit show are treated in each new episode to an average of forty minutes of brooding original music — a rarity in a medium where most dramatic shows offer only a fraction of that.

It's good news that fans need not limit themselves any longer to just a weekly dose of these eerie musical atmospherics. With the release of *The Truth and The Light: Music from The X-Files* (Warner Brothers CD 9462792, 48:36 minutes long), aficionados can now recreate the pulse-altering *X-Files* mood whenever they please. (This dark album is *not*, however, recommended for romantic moments!)

Distilled from over fifty hours of Emmy-nominee Mark Snow's original scores, some tracks augmented with new instruments and voices, *The Truth and The Light* encapsulates prime moments from the series, including concise snippets of dialogue by the various cast members themselves. After a brief spoken



intro and the show's signature theme, we find cuts ranging from the hypnotic to the menacing, featuring tumultuous storms of instruments or simply melancholy celestial strings. Any long time viewers of the show will be instantly propelled into memories of their favorite episodes.

The amount of craft and ingenuity on display in these songs speaks highly of composer Snow's dedication and skills. For each episode, Snow watches a straight-from-the-stageset videotape of Mulder and Scully's latest adventures while seated at the controls of his Synclavier, Macintosh computer, Soundcraft Sapphire mixing console and DAT machine in his Santa Monica home studio, and composes on the fly. A tolerable day finds him at its end with seven to ten minutes of fresh score. An exceptional and wrenching day might produce twenty, "but that's the limit," says Snow.

His instantly memorable theme song — which when issued as a single racked up gold record sales abroad — has

already accrued several legends around itself. The mysterious modified human whistling in it, for instance, was based on a digitized sample of Snow's whistling wife. And Snow got the brainstorm to utilize a whistle from, of all place, the theme to the old *Andy Griffith Show*, under whose composer, Earl Hagen, he once studied. Three versions were initially composed, with Carter's input and final approval of one.

At fifty years of age, after twenty years of penning much adept if unremarkable movie and television music, the Juliard trained, rock-n-roll-loving Snow seems at first a surprise candidate for the overwhelming popular favor he has received — especially among youngsters with tastes formed by rap, grunge and other styles. Yet so powerful and intrinsic is his contribution to the hit show that he has inspired the allegiance of millions who appreciate his enthusiasm and belief that "the notes are out there." ■

Paul Di Filippo

in the suit. It was really hot in there."

Morelli shares with us how he got involved in *The X-Files*, and explains how some of the stunts featured on *The X-Files* were put together, many times with harrowing results.

"I got started in the business doing commercials. Then, when the movie *Motherload* came into town, I was the stand-in for Nick Mancuso. A guy named Jacob Rupd took me under his wing and guided me to where I am today. I worked on the last bits of *Airwolf* and then became Nick's double in *Stingray*. When I was working on *Born to Run*, the producer J.P. Finn and I got along well, so when he got involved doing *X-Files* he asked me to come along.

"My most favorite stunt was in one of the last shows of the first season, where I got to jump two cars. During a car chase, my car is being chased by a police car. I just used a little car ramp down a San Francisco-type hill. My plan was to use a 16-foot-long ramp, two feet high, but Chris wanted a more natural look, so I used a one-foot high ramp. We first did the jump as a test without a ramp, and did it at 60 mph, and barely got off the ground. Then we put down the one-foot ramp. When we hit it at 60 mph, low and behold, we traveled 107 feet and got up to about 12 feet high. The guy behind me, who I use for everything, in all the years that I have used him it was the first time he said, 'Holy you know what.' It was impressive.

"Perhaps the most difficult stunt to put together was when Mulder had to jump onto a train. When the production people asked how fast the train can be going before a stuntman could jump onto the train, I answered, 'Probably a maximum of 12 mph.' They said, 'What, 12 mph, that is nothing.' I said, 'Let's go to a gym, get a treadmill going at 10 mph and jump on it and see what happens.' After I made my point, I recalled what a friend of mine, J.J. Nakaro, did on *The Sentinel*. He jumped onto a bus and set it up with a cable. I thought we should do that also, because you can erase the cable. So we got the train going about 35 mph, then the stunt double Guy Buse jumped onto it. Then we continued with Dave on the train as it was going. Ahhh, it was good. David is great, and he is just a go-for-it-guy."

"The show's fight scenes are kept to a minimum, because more fights just would not work. Chris has his vision, an idea, and it really works. Any time there is fighting, it has to be as realistic as possible. But with these combat situations, I have about three to four hours to put the fight together. How I set up my fights is like a karate kata. I start the fights, then I get the principals involved, and they put in their thoughts. By them hav-

ing their input they feel good about what they are doing. So we are taking the ideas from the people involved in the fight. I give David all the credit in the world. He knows what he can do, and he knows what he can't, and if he can't do something then we bring in a double. But most the time I like to do the stuff with him."

One of this season's most challenging stunts was from the episode "Unruly," where a deranged killer, who unintentionally and psychically imprints clues about his next murders on photographs, must zip around an abandoned building and jump over a large second-floor hole in the floor wearing carpenter stilts. Morelli recalls, "Right. We had to have this character jump over a hole. I thought, 'What am I going to do?' So I asked a stunt guy named Rick Pearce, 'So Rick, have you ever done anything on these kind of stilts before?' He cautiously said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'What do you think about jumping over a six-foot hole?' He said, 'It may be pretty hard to do.'



*Sometimes the work of effects artists aren't meant to be noticed, as when the wildly flailing — and intensely distracting — arm of a horseman had to be removed from this scene.*

"He agreed to do it. When he got the stilts, he had two weeks to practice with them. Because the hole was open with a deep fall, I put a line on him just for safety, but the wire remained slack throughout the jump, so he didn't need it. It was a cool shot looking up into the hole and seeing him jump across it. It really sold the shot."

**But** one of the most harrowing stunts done this season initially looked simple. Lindala explains, "We just did this stunt where a stunt guy Nick Lee hung

from a balcony 17 stories high for twenty minutes. It was Krycek hiding from a killer. We had a platform for Nick to stand on but he said, 'No.' By seeing his feet moving and dangling in the air it really looks great. He was gung-ho. But you know, it's interesting — when I am on the 17th floor looking at this thing, I am feeling very confident, and my special effects guy David Gauthier is great and there is nothing he can't do. When I went to the 16th floor and looked up I got really nervous. Everything went fine and good. It was just really strange how that affected me. It is important that no matter how easy or hard a stunt is, I will actually make myself nervous."

Lindala works closely coordinating many of his effects with the visual effects supervisor who is usually stationed in L.A.

Does this make for a difficult system of collaboration?

"Not really. Although makeup and visual effects do indeed overlap in collaboration, communication makes things work. What I have found from working with visual effects is that their work doesn't start until everything is shot, where with us, when everything is shot, our work is done."

One of the most memorable guest star performances was Peter Boyle's portrayal of a grumpy old insurance salesman who has the unwanted ability to predict people's deaths. Last season's "Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose" was also one of the more memorable shows that Lindala did with former visual effects supervisor Mat Beck. Lindala reminisces, "When we shot Peter Boyle's decomposition sequence, that was a collaboration between us and Mat Beck. What we did was build three different bodies. First we had a





As we went to press, David Duchovny and Dana Scully Gillian Anderson each was awarded a Golden Globe.

dummy body similar to Peter's. We started off with Peter lying down in a bed of roses with the CG backdrop blue screen. We then did two different stages of makeup on him, painting with some lividity, and some rotting starting to set in. Then with the dummy we borrowed stuff from a film about decomposition and filmed his decomposition using time lapse photography. Then with the urethane dummy body of Peter we bloated up the belly from a hole underneath the stage, where a couple of guys were just pushing up as if tough gases inside the body were just bloating it. We next went into further stages of mummification, lividity strengthening and all the green mosses that next form on the skin, leading in to the full decomposition stage when insects start doing their serious work."

Working on a show like *The X-Files* can sometimes create peculiar feelings or happenings on the set. During the production of *The Exorcist*, for instance, many unexplained events occurred during filming. For example, the bed would still shake after the special effects people had stopped shaking it. We asked Lindala whether he had experienced any such events. "We did a lot of bum make-ups during the first season, and both a friend and myself had our houses burn down. I don't know if that is anything relevant. In terms of aliens and government stuff, it is something that I have been interested in for many years — all the coverups and the potential conspiracies going on. If we are being watched in any way, well, that is just great. I have a lot of people come up to me and confess experiences and offer me further tidbits for designs, and

they give us a thumbs up with their approval. I don't discredit them or laugh at them."

This season offers Lindala new challenges to apply his craft. Not only does *The X-Files* push his creativity to the limit, but it also leads him further down that gory path of terror. One particularly arresting episode featured flesh effects that revolved around a sadistic plastic surgeon.

"In this episode, we got to play with some really fun material called full flesh. It's a hot melt leather that we constructed that belly

that was used for Tim Allen's stomach in the movie, *The Santa Clause*. We thought that it would be great for a liposuction sequence. Unfortunately you didn't see much of it in that episode. I don't know whether it was a censor thing. It was pretty graphic.

"There was a liposuction treatment performed on the wrong patient. We made this bloated stomach piece that was put on top of the actor, so when the doctor was madly

drugged and put a tube in it, the whole thing would jiggle and ripple all the way out. Blood was everywhere — it was a pretty horrific thing to see. But we had some pieces that appeared in the show, like when this woman was melted away by acid. They showed some great closeups, and again we used a gelatin piece, so it read very translucently, and that was shot beautifully. Supposedly, Gillian had a tough time working with it because it was so disturbing. But that is the kind of compliment we like to hear."

However, the most satisfying effect was when the evil doctor ripped off his face and left it squashed all over the hospital floor.

"That was the best part for us," said Lindala, shaking his head with paternal pride. "It was wonderful. The actor Richard Baymer, a great guy, had such a great time with it, and he really made the piece happen. It was a two-layer foam piece — two layers of a foam latex prosthetic. We did one sculpture of his eviscerated face, just the muscle tissue and the sort of thing found just underneath the skin. We did a copy of that, put it on a clay version on top of the actual forehead to hide it, and then glued down the muscle tissue piece, and glued down the piece on top of it at the outer edge. Luckily, we were already starting with the incision in place.

"So Richard had some great inspiration. At first we thought he would just use his hand to peel it off, but Richard took a look at it and said that he didn't want to hide this piece so much because he loved it. He embraced it. Instead, he used this surgical tool to dig into the edge of the piece and peeled it down beautifully, it was wonderful. I only wish they could have stayed with it just a little bit longer. Brett Fowler, the second unit manager, called and said, 'That was the most *X-Files* image I have ever seen.' We did a lot of research for that, too, in relation to real cosmetic surgery and where these incisions occur and just the way the skin looks when it is peeled. It's amazing what they actually do to people's skin."

One of this season's most thought-provoking episodes brought government conspiracy to a new high, with an episode on the "Cancer Man," which offered some unique insights into the deaths of JFK and Martin Luther King, the thrill of victory for the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team, and the agony of defeat for the Super Bowl losses of the Buffalo Bills. The penultimate conspiracy was the assassination of an alien by Deep Throat.

"The alien was also a gelatin piece where we rigged a bunch of bladders inside the head and torso to make it look like it was breathing. We had a full alien body, and used the skull molds from the episode "731" that we did last year, and various other body molds, and pieced them together rather than going through the expense of making new ones for just the one sequence. It looked really neat. We also did this neat fungus episode including a guy that goes through a

Continued on page 102

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# Sliders

*You're invited on an exclusive set visit with Sliders' dimension-hopping quartet of stars.*

BY DR. CRAIG REID

**W**HAT IF YOU FOUND A portal to a parallel universe?" asks Jerry O'Connell each week as over-eager inventor Quinn Mallory while the opening theme music plays for Universal Television's successful SF action-adventure series *Sliders*. "What if you could slide into thousands of different worlds, where it is the same year and you are the same person but everything else is different? And what if you can't find your way home?" These thought-provoking questions merge into a melting montage of visual fascinations that introduce us to the wild and woolly, multidimensional worlds that have forged stars O'Connell, John Rhys-Davies, Cleavant Derricks, and Sabrina Lloyd into a quartet of crusading voyagers in search of home.

Now in its third season, *Sliders* chronicles the adventures of four pioneers who discover a gateway that allows them to barnstorm into Earth's parallel dimensions via a timer that opens an uncontrollable sliding vortex. It is always a present-day Earth to which the eclectic group jumps,

but with a difference, since they encounter alternative scenarios each time they slide — worlds where parallel routes have altered both historical and personal situations. During the show's first few years, the group has "slid" into a broad menagerie of peculiar Earths, including one where the entire

city of San Francisco is a prison, a world where men are rare creatures held captive and used exclusively for breeding, and a world where the Declaration of Independence has become invalid. They have tackled dinosaurs and challenged Kromags, the latter being fellow Sliders from an Earth



# Home

*The fantastic four involuntary visitors to alternate earths are, from left to right, Quinn Mallory (Jerry O'Connell), Professor Maximillian Arturo (John Rhys-Davies), Rembrandt "Crying Man" Brown (Cleavant Derricks), and Wade Wells (Sabrina Lloyd).*



where as advanced apes they defeated mankind, and now slide to other Earths in flying manta ray ships in search of their favorite delicacy, human eyes. These creatures may even return as they attempt to find and invade *our* dimensional Earth.

It was one of LA's rare rainy days as I

headed up Highland Avenue toward Universal Pictures. The world-famous HOLLYWOOD sign poised on a nearby hillside lit my blood afire as I realize that I, too, was about to enter a different dimension. Sliding through the rain-laden portal of Universal Studios, I couldn't help but think of Quinn's

words at the start of each episode, though I will hopefully have an easier time returning home than our intrepid band of travelers.

My first visit was with one of the show's executive producers, Alan Barnette, who has produced television and film projects such as *The Equalizer*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, and *Off Limits*.

"I came on in the second year," Barnette explains. "I had seen the pilot and thought it was fabulous. I had never done this type of show before. Running the gambit of action, fantasy, drama, and SF was something that interested me. So I just signed on. Tracy Torme created the show, and he has since moved on to develop other pilots, but he still remains an executive consultant to the show.

"Things are definitely going to change this year. They have been traveling for three years now, they have all grown up, and they are still on an adventure of a lifetime. Yes, they want to go home, but they realize that there may be millions more worlds out there. The thing is that they are going to be much more proactive. There is no prime directive on this show, so they can get involved and can make a difference. Last year, I felt we were some kind of front for the A.C.L.U., with all the totalitarian governments and dictatorships they 'slid' into. Now we want more SF, more fantasy, more action-adventure, and more special effects. We want to go even further for the





second half of the season. But to reiterate, 'proactive' is the key word for this year."

Entering Stage 18, one is immediately aware of the organized clutter and background noise that fills a typical sound stage. Being careful not to trip over electrical wires and whispering continuous polite "Excuse me's," I catch a glimpse of the show's young heartthrob, the superstar-to-be, Jerry O'Connell. O'Connell plays Quinn Mallory, the handsome, college-age physics genius who caused the universe-hopping to begin in his homemade, basement laboratory by discovering the key to extradimensional sliding. He enters the makeshift living room as director Richard Compton, filming their Christmas special, blurts, "Same energy, same pace, and — action!"

**K**nocking on the door of one of the many honey-wagons (private trailers for the stars) that speckle the lot, a loud deep voice bellows, "Come in!" I am greeted by the Welsh-born, impeccably honorable, and graciously outspoken John Rhys-Davies. Best known to film audiences for his roles in such blockbuster hits as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, Rhys-Davies is no stranger to television, having accrued credits in such mini-series as James Clavell's *Shogun* and *Noble House*, *Great Expectations*, *War and Remembrance*, and *Archaeology*.

Obviously a man at one with his work, Rhys-Davies tackles each subject with the discerning tongue of a philosopher. He first shares with us his thoughts about the show, followed by a treatise on his evolving character, Professor Maximillian Arturo, Quinn's traditional professor who reluctantly acknowledges his student's brilliance and goes along

for the scientific side of his life.

The show is potentially the hottest in television," he enthuses. "We have a magic carpet that can take us anywhere in the universe, to any possible universe. The only limitation on the show is the imaginations of the writers and, with the exception of one or two admirable efforts, we are not yet fully off and running in terms of creativity. This year we have certainly made some progress. We have an order for 26 episodes for this year, but you know, the poor writers are just run off their feet and very quickly they get into midseason exhaustion. I think the show is still in its infancy (even though) I know it's in its third season. We have won acceptance, not by virtue of what we have done, but that everyone recognizes the potential of the show."

"I think Arturo was originally seen as the cowardly professor in *Lost in Space*, a part that was done admirably when it was first played, but not something that had any attraction to me. So I gave the character a spin earlier on. We had a lot of conflict about it. But now I think he is an intelligent, rational, and very curious man. He's passionate about science.



LEFT: The world's oil riches were in California rather than the Middle East, with inflammatory results, as shown in "The Fire Within". BELOW: In the episode "Dead Man Sliding," our traveling band ended up in a world where the punishment of criminals is decided by game show audiences. RIGHT: "Double Cross" showed us the inhabitants of a resources deprived world who want the band to lead them back to the rich primary Earth.

He has a lot of experience in life and when they write in that aspect of the character, I think he becomes a rich character indeed."

Actors often draw on their own pasts to create the character within, which in essence becomes the visible character without. Rhys-Davies is no different.

"I had once decided that I wanted to do science, so I studied chemistry, biology, and physics in school. I then realized that I was not good enough to win a Nobel Prize. And unless there are big prizes to be had like that, well, with an ego like mine .... (laughter) In response, I turned back and studied English at the university. I have always been interested in science and I have respect for science and engineering. I read *New Scientist* as often as I can get it here, and *Practical Mechanics* and other simplistic things. But my exposure to classic literature influenced me to pursue acting and writing."

He refined his craft at London's renowned Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and has a host of theater roles to his credit such as "Hedda Gabler," and most of Shakespeare's works. His trailer is littered with newspapers, magazines, books, and an opened laptop computer. As with any professional, not satisfied with Arturo simply being just a paycheck, Rhys-Davies hopes to employ *Sliders* as a forum to address important sociological, philosophical, and scientific issues.

"What I would like to do with the part if I can get close enough to push it," he explains, "is to act as a sounding board for important ideas that we have in society. For example, the great lookout system for large hunks of rock that are hurtling around the universe is about to be shut down in Australia to save 50 grand worth of investment each year. It might really be something we need in the future."

We next exchange knowledge of human genomic analysis, the proposed evolutionary significance of telomeres (the very tip of the chromosomes that prevent adhesion between chromosome ends that would otherwise stick together), the lineage of ape to man and how all this should relate to *Sliders*. With ambitious fervor and a gleam in his eye, Rhys-Davies continues. "Of course, the function of a program like this should be to air and explore ideas like that. I foresee an interesting story where Arturo could befriend a wise woman, basically monkey, and could teach her the ways of medicine. Later on, we see her grandchild asking about us (the four travelers),

"Were they gods?" and she says, 'No, they weren't.' He says, 'Is there a God?' and she says, 'I used to ask your grandfather Arturo the same question. He used to say, The universe is so large that anything is possible. Is God probable? Possibly. Is God necessary? Oh God, yes.'"

"My instinct for the show would be to push it further into science fiction, to be honest with you. And explore a larger universe and use a very popular forum like this to ask those perennial questions and come up with some interesting speculations like, 'Is there a God? Who are we? What do we originate from and what will we become?'"



## Mother made me ask, "Where are the sci-fi writers?"

I just watched a science fiction movie I've been waiting months to see — Albert Brooks' *Mother*. Most of America would not consider this to be a sci-fi film. After all, where are the exploding space ships? Where are the marauding Imperial Stormtroopers? And what about the cute aliens and wisecracking robots?

But for me, *Mother* qualifies, because its protagonist — one could hardly call him a hero — is a struggling science fiction writer who finds that most of the world wishes that he'd find something a little more serious to write about. Even Albert Brooks' titular mother, played by Debbie Reynolds in her first film role in twenty-six years, hopes that her son will stop wasting his time on creatures with big brains.

I'm a longtime fan of Brooks' films, so I was not worried as I entered the theater. I did not need to fear what I might have feared from such a film were it in the hands of a different writer/director. Someone who created with a less understanding eye, when telling the tale of an SF writer who has difficulty sustaining relationships with women, might have blamed science fiction itself for the mess his character's life had become. But thankfully, Brooks did not blame our beloved genre for his problems.

I don't think it will be giving too much away to let you know here in these pages that Brooks' SF writer John Henderson escapes from the film with his problems solved and his love of science fiction intact. He was not forced by the script to give up his wild and crazy sci-fi dreams in order to find fulfillment.

Which started me thinking about the way SF creators are themselves created in the movies. And as my mind cast back across a lifetime of movie-going in search of depictions of SF imaginers, I found little fodder on which to chew.

Other popular genres have been luckier.

Mystery writers are all over the place; look at Angela Lansbury in *Murder, She Wrote*, as well as actual real-life mystery novelist Anne Perry's controversial life being the seed for the Oscar-nominated *Heavenly Creatures*. Horror writers have had their day as well, as in John Carpenter's film *In The Mouth of Madness*, and many Stephen King adaptations.

Romance novelists have had their moments on the screen, too, such as with *Romancing the Stone* and many others. Even sword and sorcery writers have recently had their chance, as in the recent *The Whole Wide*

*World*, wherein Vincent D'Onofrio played Conan creator Robert E. Howard.

As for non-genre writers, well, it's clear that they have ruled the roost, though those have usually been biographical epics about writers who have already entered the literary canon. Who can forget Paul Muni playing Emile Zola, Gregory Peck as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Fredric March as Mark Twain, or Ian McKellan as D. H. Lawrence?

All of these writers have had their shot at the public's heart, but SF writers have come up short when it comes to being the basis for cinematic escapism. If not for Marty McFly's dad being transformed into a successful SF novelist at the happy ending of *Back to the Future*, Albert Brooks would be living alone on the other side of that screen, and have no one with whom to attend SF conventions.

Aside from classic authors such as Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, and C. S. Lewis, filmmakers have not been using SF writers as an ingredient on their cinematic palette at all.

What have we been doing wrong?

First of all, as much as I hate to admit it, writers generally lead lives difficult to visualize, leaving their dramas to the screen and the page, so I guess that we're lucky writers have been the subjects of movies at all.

But also, the contrast between the SF writer's life and the SF writer's cosmic subjects is so extreme as to on first glance make the life pale by comparison. Isaac Asimov, one of the greatest SF writers of all time, never flew, and preferred to spend as much of his day as possible happily writing away; vacations to him were intrusions that kept him away from his many typewriters. Yes, a movie could be made out of a life like that, but most audiences would prefer to see the robots than the writer.

Perhaps I'm just whining. I'm probably making too much out of a small thing, because it all hinges on a matter of self-interest — just like the accountant who may be baffled that there aren't enough accountants featured in movies. We all tend to look for ourselves up on the screen, and wonder what it means when we can't be found there.

Hey, Hollywood, I have an idea — how about a big budget movie about life editing an international sci-fi magazine? It's got box office potential written all over it, and will be a sure Oscar contender!

Sigh.

Actually, I know better. But even editors and writers can still dream, can't they?

Scott Edelman

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Rhys-Davies divides his time between Los Angeles and the Isle of Man, but never forgets his upbringing in Africa and the generosity of the American people. His world views are poignant and have all added to the development of what he admits is his terrible lack of diplomatic skills, yet this is who he is and that all somehow ultimately innervates the character Arturo.

As I listen to John sharing his views, beliefs, and opinions on where he would like to see the show go, I feel as if I am speaking with Arturo himself. The writers have essentially captured the spirit of this man within the components of Arturo's id. Although quite outspoken, with opinions that may at times appear quite caustic, he is not ungrateful for the opportunities he has received, and indeed has the utmost respect for writers to the point of almost being envious.

"It's a real joy in life to actually go through it earning money doing what you would do for free if given the chance. Those of us who are in that position, every time that we grumble, we should remind ourselves of that. Writers are the most fortunate people on Earth! You have a bully-boy pulp for 44-and-a-half minutes every week. If a show is around for 30 years, like *Star Trek*—and *Sliders* is that sort of genre—then over time it will probably be seen by over a billion people. The influence you can have is just remarkable. Don't give me any clichés. Surprise me. It is one of the most remarkable

opportunities for affecting the imagination of future generations. My guess is that one day, how we look at ourselves as a space-going species will partly be due to what we have read about ourselves as a space-going species today. As I have said before, *Sliders* has not reached its potential... yet."

There is a knock on the door. He bellows, "Come in." It is time for Arturo to put on his Santa Claus costume and teach the true meaning of Christmas to a world that has lost its direction, and where the only vector worth traveling upon is the path of spend, spend, spend. He closes with these endearing words: "You know, we are like a family here. All four of us get along like a family."

Exiting his trailer, we run into Jerry O'Connell. Rhys-Davies hugs him like a father. "This man here," he says to me, "is such a great guy, a guy who is going places—but a young man with his head screwed on right. You keep your eyes on him, he is going to be big." O'Connell smiles with embarrassment, but welcomes the adulation with a gleam similar to that of a satisfied son who has made his father proud.

O'Connell's trailer is incredibly neat, clean, and well organized, a far cry from the roach-infested apartment in the recent film *Joe's Apartment*, where thousands of singing and dancing American cockroaches adopted Jerry as their chum. Jerry smilingly reminisces. "Yes, some of the roaches were real, but most of the time they were computer-

generated. In fact, I preferred acting with the real roaches—at least I had something there to look at. I wasn't grossed out or anything like that, because you know I grew up in New York City, so I was raised with roaches. You know what I mean."



O'Connell boasts an impressive list of credits in both television and film. The New York native made his feature

debut a decade ago as the chunky adolescent Vern in Rob Reiner's *Stand by Me*. During the school breaks while attending New York University's Tisch School of Arts, he appeared in films and television programs such as *Calendar Girl* and *The Room Upstairs*. Although his most recent role was playing opposite Tom Cruise in *Jerry Maguire*, where he portrayed a golden-armed, NFL-bound quarterback from Texas, his enthusiasm for *Sliders* is tremendous.

"I was in NYU film school at the time, and graduation was approaching. I realized that I was going to have to go out and get a job, and I wanted something in the industry. It was pilot season and I was reading a lot of pilots. You know, in pilot season for an actor you get about 100 scripts, and 99 are crap. I read this pilot for *Sliders*, put it down and thought, 'This would be a great show if it ever became a series. The possibilities would be limitless.' It was at that moment that I really



wanted to be on this show. It got my imagination running and I really chased after it. Three years later I am still at it. I really wanted to work in science fiction because it is more fun than just standing around the studio or a theater on just one set. Plus, I am a young guy. I like to do all the stunts and running around; it is exciting in that way.

"I also liked the scientific aspects. Math and science were never my strong points in life, and I wanted to see if I could pull it off. Actually, it has been a pretty educational experience. And working with John—who is brilliant, and knows just about as much on the subject of physics and interdimensional travel as his character Professor Arturo—around him, I feel like I am going to grad school in physics. Sometimes I actually call John, 'Professor.'

**Q**uin is a young guy who has been thrown into this crazy situation. He takes it all in stride. He is pretty relaxed about the whole thing, and when times are pretty hairy, he's cool as a cucumber, and at the same time he is a physics genius. He is nothing like me. Again, math and sciences were the weakest points of my education. So I am hoping that my tenth grade algebra teacher will tune into the show so she can see how much I have improved."

While O'Connell's approach to life, acting, and the future is less philosophical than Rhys-Davies's, he sees Quinn's growing maturity as a reflection of himself. Curiously, the most difficult episode he has worked on so far wasn't one filled with fights and intricate special effects, but one that perhaps years ago he would have done without feeling so self-conscious.

"The Christmas show that we are shooting today has been the most difficult episode to work on because I have to dress up as an elf throughout most of the episode—the pointy ears, the clogs, the striped socks, the whole nine yards. You'll see me and Sabrina both in this get-up. We shot a lot of it outside, and shot in a mall yesterday, and I was eating lunch with that on in public. (laughs) That was a little embarrassing. I mean you have got to see John in his outfit, and when you see Cleavant, that's also pretty funny. I do admit, though, that we just have a blast on the show."

A banging at the door is a reminder that O'Connell has five minutes before call time. In closing, he discusses his fencing background, where he would like to see his character go, and what the future holds.

"In terms of Quinn, I would like him to actually grow with me, and he really is. When we started out three years ago he was a lot more immature and a lot more pouty, and he is a little less so now. Three years ago I was lot less mature and a little bit pouty. It's fun to see that as *Jurassic* grows, so does Quinn."



As the night rolls on so does the shooting. The rain continues to fall. Between takes of an intense scene, Sabrina Lloyd leads me to her trailer to fill me in on her character. Lloyd portrays the computer whiz Wade Wells, Quinn's good friend, whose unrequited love is a source of sexual tension during their escapades. Raised in Florida (and currently living in Virginia), at age 18 she moved to New York City in hopes of becoming an actress. Dressed in her own cute, little elfin outfit, she quips, "I know, I know, these pointy little ears. People at the mall yesterday kept asking me if I was a Vulcan or something."

Similarly to O'Connell, after weeding through tons of pilot scripts, *Sliders* was the one script that struck her fancy. "When I went to the audition for this, it was the only pilot that fascinated me. I thought, 'Wow, what a great script.' What I really like about Wade is

LEFT: *Sliders* took us to its own version of *Jurassic Park*, as the team discovers dinosaur eggs in "In Dino Veritas." ABOVE: Shifting to alternate worlds has allowed show creators to mix some fantasy with their SF, as in "Dragon Slide," when we visited a world where magic is real.



ABOVE: In "The Young and the Restless," anyone over thirty was a second class citizen. RIGHT: Rembrandt Brown got to experience the joys of motherhood in "Prince of Sliders," which took him to a world where men are the ones who carry the children.

that she has changed. I think overall, of all the characters, she is the one who has grown the most .... Originally, she was so different. A computer hacker, geeky girl, girl next door, not your typical fox (laughs) So it gave me a chance to explore more of a character than I think that a lot of shows have done. She is very strong, and I think this season she has become more feminine, intelligent, and sexier than before. And that is something that they wanted to do, to make her sexier and bolder. She has come from being a tomboy and unsure of herself, but this season she dresses and acts more like a woman."

**S**tarting out in community theater, Lloyd eventually went on to appear in such productions as *Grease* and *The Wizard of Oz*. She made her first feature-film appearance in *Chain of Desire*, and subsequently starred in *Father Hood* with Patrick Swayze. She has guest-starred in television's *Law and Order*, and starred in the telefilm *Off Limits*.

"There is a bit of me in Wade. Every actor brings a little bit of themselves into their

character. Wade is very gung ho to jump into everybody else's business, but Sabrina is more like, 'Ah, I am going to let you deal with your problems and I will deal with mine.' I think that Wade has a lot of energy and is feisty where I am laid back. But I care a lot about people, like Wade does. I am a big humanitarian and I think that Wade is very much the humanitarian on the show.

Although I don't have much free time, I am very interested in getting involved with the Starlight Foundation, where children with terminal disease can fulfill a wish of theirs. I am very fortunate because I have always had wonderful people around me who have taught me what is important in life. Helping each other for one thing. And even though I am in this industry I don't find it difficult to have a boyfriend. It is only difficult if you want it to be. Love, to me, in my relationship, is just as important as my job, and I will give it equal attention and care as I would with my career. When you go home, that's the person you are going to be with. I try not to let it be difficult.

"I am very happy where Wade is now. I mean, I would like to see her just continue to grow and be more aware of different causes and to be a strong model for women. I feel that she is getting there. I really fought for that and the producers and writers are very open to that in giving her a strong voice. And

being the only woman on the show, it is very important to me.

"Finally, I would like to say that this show has taught me everything. We have been doing the show for three years, and I have grown so much as a person and as an actor. I have been so lucky because I have had three amazing men by my side who are veteran actors in the business and the most wonderful men you could ever meet in your life. We are so fortunate because we genuinely care about each other and love each other to death. And this is what has really helped me to grow as a person. And by my acting and being more confident in my acting, that has helped me become a more confident person. Thanks, guys!"

Rounding off the foursome is Cleavon Derricks, playing Rembrandt "Crying Man" Brown, a member of the R&B group "The Spinning Tops," known for crying real tears at every performance. Rembrandt is unwit-

*Continued on page 92*



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# Alternate worlds

*Alternate worlds mean alternate special effects for Sliders' crew of illusionists.*

If you have been checking out *Sliders* this season, you will immediately note that Executive Producer Alan Barnette's vision of inserting more complex special effects into the show has been realized. Our involuntary wanderers have faced robotic spiders, giant dragons, an intelligent flame, dream-invading nerds, tornado-infested deserts, automations that render humans obso-

lete, and a giant scarab beetle. The man responsible for creating the third season's mind-numbing visuals is the show's visual effects supervisor, Ken Stranahan.

Stranahan's history includes credits on *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Space Above and Beyond* and *Nash Bridges*.

Originally schooled in traditional painting and artwork,

Stranahan, an avid furniture designer, found his true calling thanks to his brother's influence. "While [I was] working in Springfield, Massachusetts, my brother introduced me to computer animation. When he showed me the stuff he was working on I was blown away. So I bought a computer and started to learn the stuff. When I was ready, six years ago, I moved out to LA and worked on the pilot of *Sea*

asked to do a couple of *Sliders* shows, I was part of the animation team. They gave Don and me the allosaurus episode, the one in which Cleavant had a close shave with our 3-D model dinosaur. I actually modeled and textured the creature and Don did the animation. We worked in Don's kitchen for about a month to put that together. So now I work for Digital Muse, the company that just did the *Titanic* mini-series. There are now 20 of us located at the Third Street Promenade."

Our quartet of involuntary travelers also appreciated this season's more special effects.

"One of the things I really enjoy about *Sliders* is the neat special effects," says Jerry O'Connell, a giant smile beaming across his face. "Because I went to film school, I find this stuff all very interesting. To see a special effect carried out firsthand, and to actually see what I have been studying for the last four years come to life, is a real treat for me. I love it and it keeps things exciting. Also to see the explosions and stuff is really fun. But it is the CGIs [computer-generated-images] that are attractive, and how they are all put together. Recently we did this show where a fire creature had its own intelligence. We were all staring at what was supposed to be a huge fire, when it was just these huge lights putting a fire pattern on our faces. Then you see it all cut together, and we are actually standing amidst a huge fire. It is surprising when you look at it from that sense."

"I wish we had more money to do more special effects," comments Cleavant Derricks. "We have to cut corners. When we were in Vancouver, we would slide by coming in say with a shot from up at the top of a tree, and as we were sliding in with the spe-



Ken Stranahan and the staff of Digital Muse provide big-screen FX on a television budget. Above, a computer-generated T. Rex menaces Cleavant Derricks in "In Dino Veritas." Top right, Jerry O'Connell battles a giant prehistoric lizard.

lete, and a giant scarab beetle. The man responsible for creating the third season's mind-numbing visuals is the show's visual effects supervisor, Ken Stranahan. Stranahan's history includes credits on *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Space Above and Beyond* and *Nash Bridges*.

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cial effects, we were on a wire, so then we would land and roll, acting like we just came out of this vortex. It was just this whole big set-up. Although we are back in LA and the budgets are higher, filming is more expensive, so we still don't get the kinds of real special effects we would love to do." Then with a smile, "But I do remember that dinosaur thing."

Sabrina Lloyd quickly quips, "Acting like nothing is there was initially a little bit of a challenge, but I guess that is where all your training comes in. Now you don't think about it as much anymore." She jokingly yells, "Okay, one more time, jump into the air," and giggles.

John Rhys-Davies adds, "Let me tell you, it can certainly wrong-foot you, terribly (a roar of laughter), as you act to fill in a

description and find in the end the description doesn't match what they have laid in. Although, by in large, I am personally increasingly wary and skeptical of CGI, but if you are prepared to do it properly and invest the money, you can indeed get extraordinary results. The main problem is, if the special effect is your main virtue you might be setting yourself up for failure unless you are prepared to match that every week."

Stranahan continues, "I have only been the visual effects supervisor on *Sliders* for two months. Sarah Johnstone works with me as the visual effects coordinator. This is fairly new. I took over from Mark Kochinsky who I worked with a lot at Encore Visual Effects. Since doing the allosaurus, we recently did the

flying dragon [the one Quinn slew with a sword]. Don and I did the modeling and texturing and the animation was done by Steve Carpenter. A lot of what I am doing is the supervising, so for now I am only doing about 25 percent of the actual animation, but luckily at Digital Muse we have some great animators."

For the third season's premiere, three mechanical robot spiders, fangs bristling with deadly electricity, menacingly scurry down a metal web toward Rembrandt. The spiders were designed and modeled by John Daniel and animated by David Lombardi. Brad Hayes not only created the killer tornado that ravaged one of the dimensional Earths but he also created the flitting intelligent flame that could eventually speak

to Quinn. The futuristic Golden Gate Bridge and the bullet train that travels through it, which gave Rembrandt the ride of his life, was designed, modeled, and animated by Larry Bowman.

But Stranahan's greatest challenge will be a special treasure effect slated for later in the season — the creation of a Volkswagen-sized scarab beetle, for an episode to be directed by Adam Nimoy. Stranahan comments, "Adam really wanted to make this a great show. We basically built a giant CGI scarab beetle. Luckily one of our animators actually studied entomology in school. I must apologize for some of the artistic license we took. Originally it was very accurate looking, then the claws on the front were not big enough so we ended up changing a lot of things. But it should still look pretty cool. It is really top notch and we put a lot of time into it. I ended up modeling the bug, but John worked hard on trying to make it a great looking bug. It is really amazing."

And what about the most frequent effect, the ever-important sliding vortex that is slightly reminiscent of the time traveling vortex from *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* and the wormhole from *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Stranahan comments, "Brandon Smith is the man behind the numerous vortex elements that are the backbone of the series. We have been experimenting with a couple of things and have sort of changed it in the plot line so it might get a slightly different look. There is always another interesting way of having it open up as opposed to just having them jumping out of it onto the street. But overall, although our technology gets better and our whole system is more refined, essentially it still all comes down to our creativity." □

# SCI-FI'S NOVELTY ACT

*Turning Science Fiction's Favorite Novels  
into Movie Magic*

BY DAN PEREZ

**L**ike the best novels, the best movies look deceptively effortless: you lose yourself in the story, you're caught up in the characters and it's a great experience. You lose track of the idea that somewhere out there a large number of people with differing ideas and approaches somehow came together and managed to produce the movie. Film is the most collaborative art form there is, and with so many people involved — writers, producers, directors, studio executives, actors, crew people, distributors — the chances that something will go awry during the process are pretty good. When a good movie emerges from this combined effort, it's something this side of amazing.

And when a movie is adapted from a novel, like director Paul Verhoeven's upcoming version of Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, there are even more hurdles to overcome. An adaptation must be done, condensing a novel that is hundreds of pages long to a 100-page screenplay that is, from a pure



Paul Verhoeven's screen translation of Robert A. Heinlein's beloved *Starship Troopers* (pictured below) — which won the 1960 Hugo Award for Best Science Fiction Novel — may be the most eagerly awaited sci-fi novel adaptation of all time.





ABOVE: The 1950 sci-fi classic *Destination Moon* was based on Heinlein's novel *Rocket Ship Calileo*.

BELOW: Both Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* and Francois Truffaut's filmed version are timely warnings against censorship.

word-count perspective, the equivalent of a 40-page novella. And when the book is long, such as the 474-page *Dune*, the task becomes monumental. The solution would seem to be to make longer movies, but the Hollywood standard is 90 minutes (three 30-minute acts) and filmmakers are under enormous pressure to pare longer movies down to this length. A long script will likely end up being cut by a director.

## Making movies

from books can prove to be a double-edged sword. On the plus side, books are, to speak a bit of Hollywood-ese, "pre-sold." Fans of the book will be anxious to see the movie, and this is good for the author, as well, for a new edition of the book will usually be printed to coincide with the release of the movie. Of course, the down side can be that fans of the book may be disappointed in the almost inevitable changes that occur once the book is committed to film. Controversy sometimes enters the fray, for better or worse: an example is the recent brouhaha surrounding the sexually explicit subject

matter in the movie version of J. G. Ballard's *Crash*.

Some of the earliest science fiction movies ever made came from novels. It's often argued that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was the first science fiction novel, and it has inspired numerous movies, from a 1910 Edison Company silent feature to Kenneth

the first science fiction novel, and it has inspired numerous movies, from a 1910 Edison Company silent feature to Kenneth Branagh's 1994 version. Most fans will name James Whale's 1931 classic *Frankenstein*, starring Boris Karloff as the Monster, as the definitive adaptation.

Jules Verne has long been a movie favorite. A silent version of Verne's submarine adventure *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* debuted in 1916. Verne's sequel, *The Mysterious Island*, was filmed in 1929 and starred Lionel Barrymore. Later, both films would be remade. Walt Disney's splendid 1954 version of *20,000 Leagues* remains one of the all-time great adventure movies, with a brooding James Mason as Captain Nemo and Oscar-winning art direction

and special effects. The great Ray Harryhausen animated a giant crab, huge bees and a prehistoric *Phorusrhacos* in the 1961 version of *The Mysterious Island*. The creatures were nowhere to be found in Verne's novel, but the movie, which features a fine Bernard Herrman score, still delights. James Mason returned in 1959, this time making an entertaining version of Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Other notable Verne adapta-







tions include *From the Earth to the Moon*, *Master of the World*, and *Five Weeks in a Balloon*. Two new TV movie versions of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* are due in 1997. The ABC version features Michael Caine as Captain Nemo and Patrick Dempsey as Professor Aronnax, while the CBS version stars Richard Crenna and Ben Cross.

**H.G. Wells** is another Hollywood favorite. He adapted his own *The Shape of Things To Come* into a screenplay himself, and after revisions, it became 1936's *Things To Come*, directed by William Cameron Menzies. This epic film of war, future technology and space exploration starred Raymond Massey, Cedric Hardwicke and Ralph Richardson. Orson Welles panicked America with his famous radio news-flash adaptation of *War of the Worlds* on Halloween in 1936, and George Pal brought this classic Martian invasion story to the screen in memorable form in 1953. Pal's bronze manta-shaped war machines and the other special effects won an Oscar, and the film remains an eerie classic. Claude Rains became *The Invisible Man* in 1933. The movie featured groundbreaking special effects and spawned a number of sequels and remakes. George Pal filmed Wells' time travel classic *The Time Machine* in 1960 with interesting time-lapse special effects and ghoulish Morlocks. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* became 1933's

*The Island of Lost Souls*. Charles Laughton was terrific as Dr. Moreau, as was Bela Lugosi as the Sayer of the Law. 1977 and 1996 versions of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* starred Burt Lancaster and Marlon Brando in the title role. Other Wells adaptations include *Food of the Gods* and *First Men in the Moon*.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has been filmed a number of times, but the definitive version is 1936's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* starring Fredric March.

Ray Bradbury adapted his



**ABOVE LEFT:** Before donning Miami Vice's three day beard, Don Johnson starred in Harlan Ellison's *A Boy and His Dog*. **ABOVE:** Pierre Boulle, author of the famed novel *A Bridge on the River Kwai*, also wrote the novel that began the Planet of the Apes film franchise.

evocative short story "The Fog Horn" into one of the better radioactive monster films of the '50s in *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*. The real star of this movie is Ray Harryhausen's stop motion "Rhedosaurus," which runs amok in New York City and has a spectacular death scene at Coney Island. Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* became director Francois Truffaut's first (and only) English-language film in 1967, and featured Oskar Werner as the fireman Montag. In 1969, three stories from Bradbury's short story collection *The Illustrated Man* were filmed, with an illustrated Rod Steiger in the title role.

One useful approach to adapting novel length works for the screen is to film them as miniseries for television, and Bradbury's classic *The Martian Chronicles* became just such an adaptation in 1980. It starred Rod Hudson, Fritz Weaver and Darren McGavin. USA Network's *Ray Bradbury Theater* fea-

tured adaptations of Bradbury's short stories.

Robert A. Heinlein's *Rocket Ship Galileo* became 1950's *Destination Moon*, and an effective version of *The Puppet Masters* was filmed in 1994 with Donald Sutherland. Paul Ver-

hoeven's adaptation of Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* is scheduled for next November.

George Langelaan's story "The Fly" was adapted for the screen by novelist James Clavell (!) in 1958, featuring Al (aka David) Hedison and the unfortunate scientist merged with a common housefly in a teleportation accident. David Cronenberg directed an excellent remake in 1986 with Jeff Goldblum and Geena Davis.

George Pal filmed Philip Wylie's novel of planetary disaster, *When Worlds Collide* in 1951. The tense thriller-adventure won an Oscar for special effects.

Also in 1951, John W. Campbell Jr.'s "Who



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Goes There?," a tale of a lethal crashed alien in the Arctic, came to the silver screen as *The Thing From Another World*. The Howard Hawks production, directed by Christian Nyby, featured a strong cast battling the intelligent plant creature, played by James Arness. John Carpenter made a splattery, effective remake in 1982.

Rounding out what was a banner year for filmed science fiction, 1951's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* was based on Harry Bates' short story "Farewell to the Master." This classic features Michael Rennie as the Klaatu, the alien who brings a warning against aggression to Earth, along with the unforgettable police robot Gort.

## George Orwell's

classic novel of totalitarian oppression, 1984, was first adapted for the screen in 1955 with Edmund O'Brien as Winston Smith. The definitive version proved to be the harrowing version actually released in 1984, starring John Hurt and Richard Burton.

In 1956, Jack Finney's *The Body Snatchers* became the gripping *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* in the capable hands of director Don Siegel. Kevin McCarthy epitomizes the soul of Cold War paranoia as he struggles against the "pod people:" cold, emotionless clones of human beings. A 1978 remake starred Donald Sutherland and Brooke Adams (McCarthy appeared in a brief cameo, as well).

Richard Matheson's novel *The Shrinking Man* became *The Incredible Shrinking Man* in

1957, directed by Jack Arnold and starring Grant Williams in the title role. Matheson's classic science fiction/horror novel *I Am Legend* was adapted as *Omega Man* in 1971, with Charlton Heston fighting zombie-like vampires. Less well known is that *I Am Legend* was also the inspiration for George Romero's 1968 *Night of the Living Dead* and its sequels.

In 1960, John Wyndham's novel of telepathic alien children, *The Midwich Cuckoos*, was filmed as *Village of the Damned*, with George Sanders trying to defeat the young invaders. Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids*, which featured killer plants from outer space, was adapted to the screen in 1962. Though the special effects run hot and cold, the movie is still quite effective.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* was not a science fiction novel, but it did serve as the inspiration for an effective science fiction film in the form of 1964's *Robinson Crusoe on Mars*, with George Pal at the helm again. Paul Mantee plays an astronaut struggling to survive after he is stranded on Mars. There's even a Friday character, played by Victor Lundin.

## 1968's Planet

of the Apes, based on Pierre Boulle's novel *Monkey Planet*, pitted Charlton Heston against a society of intelligent apes. The film features Oscar-winning makeup and one of the best endings of any science fiction film. Intriguingly, the book and the film each have different twist endings. In the book, the humans escape





Popular SF tales have often translated into good sci-fi flicks, as in Arthur C. Clarke's 2001: A Space Odyssey (top left) and Frank Herbert's Dune (below left). SF fandom eagerly awaits learning whether Robert Heinlein's Starship Troopers (pictured above and below) will do the same in the hands of director Paul Verhoeven (seen at left in photo below).

from the ape planet and return to Earth, only to discover that apes have assumed supremacy on Earth as well. The movie version had Charlton Heston discover that the ape world was Earth, only in the future, and set the stage for a number of time travel-oriented sequels. SF writers Jerry Pournelle and George Alec Effinger wrote novelizations of the movies.

1969 brought us 2001: A Space Odyssey, one of the finest science fiction films ever made. Adapted from Arthur C. Clarke's novella "The Sentinel," Stanley Kubrick's 2001 redefined the look of science fiction films and produced a challenging narrative that spans thousands of years.

**Kubrick** returned to science fiction in 1971 with a relatively faithful adaptation of Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*. Malcolm McDowell stars as the leader of a sociopathic gang of droogs. As in 2001, Kubrick makes striking use of music to enhance his narrative.

Also in 1971 came the screen version of Michael Crichton's *Andromeda Strain*. This thriller about a killer virus from outer space was faithful to the book, and boasted excellent production values. Its popularity also paved the way for screen adaptations of other Crichton books, such as *The Terminal Man* (1974), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Congo* (1995) and the upcoming *Sphere*.

Kurt Vonnegut's time travel novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* was adapted in 1972, and a version of his book *Slapstick* was filmed in 1984

as *Slapstick (of Another Kind)* in 1984.

Also in 1972, Stanislaw Lem's novel *Solaris* was released in movie form. The stately, hypnotic narrative follows scientists studying a planet-sized lifeform.

Harry Harrison's cautionary novel *Make Room! Make Room!* was filmed as *Soylent Green* in 1973, and Charlton Heston stars as the man who ends up screaming "Soylent Green is people!"

In 1975, Harlan Ellison's dystopian *A Boy and His Dog* came to the big screen, based on the short story of the same name, and became a cult favorite. Don Johnson and a telepathic, highly intelligent dog named Blood took the title roles.

Another cult favorite was Ridley Scott's 1982 *Blade Runner*, an atmospheric version of

Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. The title comes from *The Blade Runner*, a story by SF writer Alan Nourse. Director Ridley Scott, thinking the title would make a good code name for Deckard (Harrison Ford), purchased rights in perpetuity to the title only. No other elements of Nourse's tale were used. Other adaptations of Dick's work include *Total Recall* (1990) and *Screamers* (1996).

After a troubled production history (directors Ridley Scott and Alejandro Jodorowsky both tried unsuccessfully to make the film), Frank Herbert's monumental ecological novel *Dune* was filmed by David Lynch in 1984. While many fans of the book disliked Lynch's dark approach, Herbert himself liked the adaptation.

The above is but a sampling of the rich diversity of science fiction novels and stories that have been captured on the big screen. New adaptations are being filmed each month, as well (in addition to Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, watch for a version of David Brin's *The Postman* — starring Kevin Costner — in the near future). If you've already seen the movies listed above, check out the books, and vice versa. Remember — if you want to see where sci-fi's filmic imaginers get their ideas, you need only go to your local bookstore. □





# COSMIC CARTOONS

*Science Fiction  
has invaded the  
animated world—  
and the invader  
is winning.*

BY JEREMY BLOOM



Once upon a time,

a trip to another planet required a flight in a rocket ship on very visible wires. In those dark days before special effects, before it was possible to make a *Star Wars*, a *Jurassic Park*, or a *Babylon Five*, the cartoon medium could take us — with ease! — on journeys to other worlds. From Marvin the Martian to George Jetson, cartoons were perfectly suited to the Sci-Fi genre. You can do fun things



with animation, such as keep a full-size samurai sword in a sheath on a calf-length boot. Or make transformers that really transform, in three dimensions, right in front of your eyes.

Despite this, there have been a lot more super-hero and funny animal cartoons over the years than Sci-Fi. But the 1996-97 season stands on the threshold of a new animated age. There are more Sci-Fi cartoons, running on more networks, than ever

before. And, while most of them are made the same way that *Bugs Bunny* and *Jonny Quest* were made back in the '60s — through the laborious process of hand-painting cartoon cells — we are seeing the first 'toons of the future, made with full computer-generated imagery also known as CGI.

Ironically, one of the first new shows to use CGI is, in part, a throwback to the '60s.

When it was first made in 1964,

*Jonny Quest* was part *Indiana Jones*, part *Twilight Zone*, part *The X-Files*. Today, *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest* picks up a few years after the original left off, with a now teen-aged Jonny and his side-kicks tracking down everything from evil scientists to the Philosophers' Stone of Alchemy.

It is also ironic, considering the "Real Adventures" of the show's title, that the most interesting adventures take place in Virtual Reality. "Quest-

ABOVE: The evil Megabyte gloats as Dot looks on in a scene from Reboot.

LEFT: *Optimus, of Beast War*, an upcoming series from the Reboot creators.



ABOVE: Jonny Quest moves from cels to computer animation when he enters the Questworld. BELOW: The crew of Wing Commander brings the excitement of Star Wars to animation. TOP RIGHT: *The Wing Commander* starships. BELOW RIGHT: Mad science rules in Dexter's Laboratory.

world" is a fancy-looking take on William Gibson's Cyberspace, accessed by a computer and some very funky wrap-around shades. The bad news for Jonny: the Quest family's personal nemesis, mad/evil scientist Jeremiah Surd, is a helpless cripple in the real world, but in Questworld he's a giant....

The show moves back and forth between the cell-frame animation of the "real world" and the computer-generated scenes of Questworld. On the real-world side, we get Scooby-Doo-style adventures, with "those darned kids" preventing the bad guys from doing the bad things that bad guys always want to do. But at the same time, in Questworld, things are a little more complex, and the bad guys are having it all their own way so far.

Speaking of mad scientists... Ted Turner's Cartoon Network has one of the funniest toons to emerge since Spielberg's *Animaniacs*, in *Dexter's Laboratory*. The premise: pre-teen boy

genius Dexter conducts an assortment of earth-shaking (and, occasionally, ego-enhancing) experiments in the vast laboratory that he has somehow managed to construct in his parents' suburban home. They don't seem to notice — this show takes the standard 'toon conceit of parental benign neglect and elevates it to an art form, as when dad gives little Dexter a present, which Dexter receives with the sort of joy that one normally reserves for gifts of weeks-dead fish or rock-hard Xmas fruitcakes. "Thank you dad," says Dexter,

his voice dripping with sarcasm (in just one more gonzo twist, the kid speaks with a thick Carpathian accent). "A video game. An OLD video game."

## As you would

expect in comedy, something always goes wrong in the work of this very young Dr. Frankenstein... often because of the meddling of Dexter's ditzzy older sister Dee Dee. The twist: it's just as often Dee Dee who saves the day. Yes, even ditzzy sisters can be heroes.

*Dexter's Laboratory* originated as a short subject, one of 48 *World Premier Toons* commissioned by this cartoon channel. The response was good enough that the network had creator Genndy Tartakovsky (a 26-year-old animation whiz-kid, someone worth keeping an eye on) crank out a whole series. Like all the best cartoon shows, Tartakovsky came up with some warped side-characters: Marvel comics fans will be amused by the familiar-looking chump superhero "The Infraggable Crunk"; "Dial M for Monkey" makes a hero of a chimp





(who goes out and tries to save the world while Dexter isn't looking... shades of *Pinky and the Brain*).

And speaking of chimps... we have several offerings this season on the Space Opera side of Sci-Fi, ranging from the fairly standard *Flash Gordon* (featuring the teen-aged Flash performing his usual solar-system-saving feats of daring-do) to the rather unusual *Captain Simian* and the

*Space Monkeys*. Solar monkey-shines? There's also *Space Ghost*, a near-Sci-Fi talk show that combines an animated host with live guests (ranging from the BeeGees to Weird Al Yankovic) and high-frontier weirdness a la *Mystery Science Theater 3000*; it's become a cult hit.

The most impressive of the Space Operas is USA's *Wing Commander Academy*. An ironic twist to the show

is that the computer game upon which this show is based broke new ground five years ago by filming live-action sequences with actors such as Mark Hamill and Malcolm McDowell and incorporating the footage into the game. Now, in bringing it to TV, they're going back to cell animation.

## Mark Hamill

returns to do the voice of Maverick, a rock-solid hero type not unlike his Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*. In the computer games, Maverick is a seasoned hero; the cartoon is actually a prequel, going back to the character's teen days in the Academy (shades of Wesley Crusher).

True science fiction fans may have a few problems with *Wing Commander*. For a setting of 2655, the science doesn't look that far advanced from what we use now. And the alien empire being battled looks suspiciously like a cross between *Star Trek's* Klingons and Larry Niven's Kzinti.

But overall it's a good effort, and they do throw in some nice touches: Maverick goes to a soda machine and





runs a swipe-card through the reader ("Hey, that's just today's tech") and the soda can materializes in front of him ("Uh... okay, we don't have the technology to do that just yet").

**B**ut without a doubt the coolest thing being done in SF cartoons — and possibly the coolest thing happening on TV overall — is *Reboot*.

This fully computer-animated masterpiece of a show ran on ABC in the U.S. two years ago, but then was bounced (possibly due to corporate buy-out politics). It's back this year in syndication in most major markets in the U.S. (in Canada, the show's home and native land, it's been running without a hiatus for the past three years).

It's very difficult to do *Reboot* justice with mere words. The whole

thing takes place *within* a computer; the characters are sprites and software manifestations in human and robot forms. The folks at Mainframe, the Vancouver-based company that produces the show with partner Alliance Communications, pretty much rewrote the book on CGI in order to make it happen, developing eight distinct computer programs that allow them to animate, render and edit faster than anybody else. Where it might take eight weeks or longer to produce a single 60-second CGI commercial, the folks at Mainframe can crank out a 22-minute episode in that same eight weeks, with the same level of detail, realism, and sense of "gee-whiz".

When you see *Reboot*, you can't help but feeling "wow." This isn't a cartoon — it's art.

No stiff shots of stony faces, immobile except for wagging jaws. No bor-

ing *Yogi Bear*-style running sequences where the legs move and background scrolls around and around while the bodies sit in the same place on the screen stiff as statues.

*Reboot*'s character's have facial expressions, muscles that move smoothly under their glossy uniforms as they walk, surface textures (and sometimes they're not *real* surface textures, which is even cooler). The action (and there is a *lot* of action) all happens in three dimensions. It's all very, very... cool.

Fortunately, they didn't just hire computer programmers and artists — they also hired writers. The shows have action, and also nice little "human" touches; they've got a wicked sense of humor, too. The title to the show "Trust No One" flashes across the screen in green, glowing letters that will be familiar to the fans of a certain rabidly-pop-



ular Sci-Fi show... later, we meet a couple of "special agents" of the operating system: a drawing droid named Fax Modem and his red-haired green-eyed (like all the other droids she only has one eye, but it's

a lovely green) Data Nully... you get the picture.

Having interesting, believable characters makes a big difference. *Dexter's Laboratory's* Genndy Tartakovsky says character is the make-or-break factor in successful animation. "If you look at *Toy Story*, what really works is that it still has good character-acting in it." The cartoon shows that have attracted the greatest following — like *Dexter*, like *Pinky and the Brain*, like *Jonny Quest* — have tended to be the ones with really well-defined characters. *Reboot* has that; *Wing Commander* may need to work a little more.

These current cartoon creators have gone pretty far afield to pull in some outstanding talent to provide the voices for this year's crop. Jerry Doyle (Garibaldi on *Babylon 5*), Michael Dorn (*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*), and Malcolm McDowell (famed for assorted villains) put the words in the mouth of Captain Simlan and his crew of spacefaring monkeys. The voice of the young Dexterstein probably won't be as readily recognizable — it's Christine Cavanaugh, who provided the vocals for *Babe*, the Oscar-nominated pig. The *Jonny Quest* voice is provided by J. D. Roth, familiar to fans of such kid TV game shows as *Masters of the Maze* and *Fun House*, while *Jonny's* dad, Dr. Benton Quest, is veteran character George Segal (whose credits range from *Who's Afraid of the Virginia Wolf?* to last year's *The Mirror Has Two Faces*). And who better to have on your side as bodyguard Race Bannon than Robert Patrick (the T-1000 in *Terminator II*)?

The Mainframe/Alliance folks have another series on the air this year, too — *Beast Wars*. Using the same technology, they have taken the "transformers" concept and made it

LEFT: *Airazor* and *Tigertron* are two of the colorful villains to be featured in the upcoming *Beast War*. BELOW: Dot, Enzo and Bob are the computerized leads of *Reboot*. RIGHT: *Reboot's* Dot in action, aboard one of *Reboot's* many gizmos.



actually fly — robots that transform in to animals and dinosaurs. And they're also at work on an animated feature for Imax, based on the *Reboot* characters.

Over the next few years, watch for more shows like *Reboot* — as the technology continues to multiply, companies like Hanna-Barbera are bound to go over to an all-CGI format. Why not? It looks spectacular, and the folks at Mainframe claim their costs are already comparable to cell-frame animation. We could be on the brink of a new Golden Age of animation.

Stay "toon'd" for further developments. □



## Get acquainted with some sci-fi films that make Ed Wood's look like masterworks.

BY LAWRENCE TUCKER

**T**OM WEAVER IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED to be a consummate pro in a field of doofuses. If you read many genre-movie magazines, you've no doubt discovered that most of the interviews they run are, to say the least, amateurish, especially those dealing with actors and filmmakers of the past. All too often the interviewer's questions are ignorant or overfamiliar, and the quondam celebrity — whether a half-forgotten

B-movie director, a retired screenwriter, or an aging scream queen — comes off as either obnoxiously boastful or pathetically over the hill.

Weaver, however, is always a class act. Depend on him to ask the smartest questions and (no mean trick some-

is by their progressively more eccentric titles, ranging from the staid *Interviews with B Science Fiction and Horror Movie Makers* (421 pp, \$38.50), the first in the series, to the fifth and most recent, *It Came from Weaver Five* (386 pp, \$38.50). (The prices, you'll notice, are high; McFarland's main market is libraries, and the books all come bound in sturdy cloth library bindings.)

In the first book, Weaver makes plain his uncondescending affection for the genre — an affection that shines through the entire series. "Fans of Hollywood gloss," he writes, with just a touch of defiance, "be warned. This may not be the sort of interview book you're used to. There are no tales of multimillion dollar productions or of pampered glitterati, no elegant Tinseltown soirées, big premieres or jet-set ostentation. Most of the films discussed in this book are medium- to low-budget productions, some of them made by people who are at best footnotes in the big book of Hollywood history. Perhaps it *does* require something of an open and tolerant mind to see the good in pictures about Styrofoam crab monsters, Martian Jell-O, hubcaps, sparklers and bathospheres from outer space, thirtyish teenagers and bald midgets armed with vacuum cleaners. But this is not meant as any sort of apology. It takes far more talent and imagination to make a good film on a low budget than to make one with all the materials and means of a major studio at one's disposal."

One such talent — more than a footnote, but certainly a name few would recognize — is Gene Fowler, Jr., who directed two of the 1950s' most celebrated B-movies, famous (even among those who've never seen them) for their lurid titles: *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* and *I Married a Monster from Outer Space*.

Interviewed in the second book in the series, *Science Fiction Stars and Horror Heroes* (458 pp, \$38.50), Fowler displays the humility and good humor that saw him through these and



Some B movies made for Grade A memories, as in *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (with Ricou Browning and Julie Adams, at left) and *Forbidden Planet* (featuring Anne Francis, far right).

times) to make his subjects sound both thoughtful and articulate.

Since 1988, Weaver has been collecting the interviews he's done for various film magazines, often expanding and updating them, into a series of books for McFarland, each containing around two dozen pieces illustrated with black and white photos. The books (and the selection of photos) are uniformly excellent; in fact, the only way to distinguish them

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To anyone concerned:

I'm writing this letter from many years in the past — I'm 58 years old, and I am *not* at all impressed by all the computer-generated special effects in today's films. Some are very spectacular. However, writing as I am, as a '50s aficionado of the really great SF films of all time, most of them were black and white (*Them*, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, etc.), and the special effects were special — George Pal's great destruction of New York City and the launch of the rocket in *When Worlds Collide* was one of SF film's greatest moments.

Another great moment was the landing of the spaceship in Washington, DC in the singular cult film *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. The special effects were outstanding — the spacecraft's shadow on the mall, the opening and the closing of the spacecraft. Which brings us to another question (to me, the question of the century) — who was the actor in the Gort costume? That fluid robot character, to my mind, is one of the all time greats in sci-fi films (C3PO and R2D2 notwithstanding). I'm betting that the actor who was in that marvelous robot suit was James Arness (who was *The Thing* in the movie of the same name, based on a story "Who Goes There?" by John Campbell).

I consider myself a cognizant student of great science fiction print and film. One of my favorite authors is Arthur C. Clarke. H. G. Wells, Theodore Sturgeon, Ben Bova, Lester del Rey, Poul Anderson, Robert Heinlein — these are all authors whose work stands above most others.

The field of sci-fi writing, and subsequent translation to TV and film, is vast. I hope that the up-and-coming generation of writers can approach, or even appreciate, the work they have to live up to!

Apprehensively yours,  
Leon J. Moody

Actor James Arness, who played *The Thing* and later went on to star in *Gunsnake*, was not the man hidden inside the Gort suit. That honor went to Lock Martin, discovered for the role while working as the doorman at the famed Grauman's Chinese Theatre. Martin (1916-1959) had a masked role in yet another sci-fi favorite, the original *Invasion from Mars*, where he played one of the film's rubber-suited mutants.

Dear Editors:

I was elated to read in *USA Today* and also hear on the Sci-Fi Channel that one of my favorite sci-fi dramas — *SeaQuest* — would be featured on the Sci-Fi Channel. But since then, I haven't heard another word about it!

When will *SeaQuest* start appearing on the



No, the man in the Gort suit was not James Arness, who later starred in TV's *Gunsnake*.

Sci-Fi Channel? Three original *SeaQuest* episodes were never even shown on NBC during its last season. I am really looking forward to seeing them.

Sci-Fi Entertainment is fun to read, and the Sci-Fi Channel is fun to watch. Thanks!  
Sincerely,  
Nancy Rowland

*SeaQuest* will begin its life on the Sci-Fi Channel (U.S.) on Monday, March 31st, at 8:00 PM EST, with a repeat at midnight. The show will air Mondays through Thursdays at these times.

Dear Mr. Edelman:

Let me get this straight. In the Special Edition of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, Greedo fires at Han, a sitting target at point-blank range, and misses? Gee, I thought only Imperial Stormtroopers were that precise!

Not everyone has been thrilled with the prospect of these Special Editions. A common reaction among fans I know is "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Lucas' tinkering with his own movie hasn't disturbed me that much, as he mostly seems to be tweaking the SFX

and not messing with the plot. But the revised Greedo/Han confrontation crosses that line. I don't know who Lucas has been listening to, but I've never heard any complaint about this scene in my corner of fandom. (I have heard complaints that Han was ineffectual in *Jedi*.) It's clear to me that the only reason Greedo didn't just pop Han right off was that he wanted to gloat first. Lucas isn't fixing anything, he's just yielding to somebody's idea of political correctness.

Metaphors be with you,  
Tim Byles

Dear Editors:

I browsed over the Future Shock column in the latest issue of this magazine, and I have to confess that for all the upcoming sci-fi and fantasy programs and films listed, there was one project that was noticeably missing: the new *Doctor Who* series. Thanks to total apathy on the part of Fox television, Universal, and the BBC, there will probably never be one.

Even though I am a relative newcomer to *Doctor Who* fandom, I know how strong the devotion of the fans is. We have written letters and sent e-mail messages to the afore-

Continued on page 12

other low-budget productions — and that typifies the men and women Weaver interviews. Like most of them, instead of griping, he did his best with the hand (or title) he was dealt: "I did not try to make just an exploitation picture," he says. "I was trying to do something with a little substance to it." That included making the first film's mad-scientist villain somewhat sympathetic: "I always figured that a villain, in his own eyes, was a very good, very nice fellow ... He was actually trying to do good for the world."

Fowler expresses one opinion that, for a Hollywood director, is decidedly unconventional: "Directors," he says, "shouldn't be allowed to edit their own movies"; indeed, he's convinced that many a "director's cut" can be an exercise in sheer self-indulgence. "I think you should allow the editor to put the picture together without any kind of supervision whatsoever," he says. "Because he sometimes can find things that you don't even know you shot." I'm not sure whether to attribute this view to Fowler's modesty (and maybe plain good sense) or to the fact that he himself is a former film editor.

One of the highlights, for me, of Weaver's third book, *Attack of the Monster Movie Makers* (393 pp, \$35), is his interview with Kenneth Tobey, star of the classic 1951 version of *The Thing*. Talk about modesty and good humor! Tobey is extremely self-deprecatory, quick to criticize his own work ("I don't think I was very good in it," he says of his portrayal of what he terms "the head cricket" — the alien leader — in *Strange Invaders*, "but the director seemed to like it"), candid about the ups and downs of his rocky career, and grateful for those, such as director Joe Dante and fellow actor James Arness, who've kept him working. And for the record, he confirms that, despite Christian Nyby's name in the credits, it was producer Howard Hawks who really directed *The Thing* — "all except one scene. Chris Nyby directed us coming through a door, and it's the worst scene in the picture."

My favorite is the fourth book in the series, *They Fought in the Creature Features* (326 pp, \$38.50), in part because of its frontispiece, a posed photo, hilarious yet somehow touching, of the gorgeous Julie Adams shaking hands with the Creature from the Black Lagoon — or rather, with her costar in the 1954 movie, the underwater performer Ricou Browning, dressed in what appears to be an early stage of his Gill Man costume, a body suit with fish-faced Creature mask but no scales yet attached. Adams is beaming affectionately and flashing a 600-watt smile; the Creature, staring pop-eyed at her as it stiffly grips her hand, seems as amazed at her beauty as we are.

"The Creature scared people," says Adams, in the book's first interview, "but there was also a sort of sweetness about it. In the real classics, there always is that feeling of compassion for the monster. I think maybe it touches something in ourselves,

maybe the darker parts of ourselves, that love to be loved and think they really can't ever be loved."

Browning, interviewed later in the book, talks about the beloved film and TV series *Flipper*, which he created, and recalls some of the difficulties of playing the Creature: "It was kind of like swimming in your overcoat ... The eyes of the Creature mask were a couple of inches beyond my eyes, so it was kind of like looking through a keyhole." A photo shows him in full Creature costume with the headpiece removed; he looks like a rugged movie star, smiling and handsome.

This volume in the series also contains interviews with three cast members of the 1956 sci-fi film *Forbidden Planet*: Richard Anderson (the *Id* Creature's first victim), George Wallace (best remembered as the flying Commando Cody in the 1952 serial *Radar Men from the Moon*), and Anne Francis, who says that playing the movie's naive young heroine required "no great preparation on my part; I wasn't that worldly-wise at that point myself."

Francis voices a sentiment common to many of the performers interviewed in these books: astonishment — and gratitude — that the movie in question has proved so popular. "At the time, I don't think that any of us really were aware of the fact that it was going to turn into a longtime cult film ... *Forbidden Planet* just had a life of its own, something that none of us was aware was going to happen." Ricou Browning expresses the same feeling: "As far as I see it, *Creature from the Black Lagoon* was just another movie, just another job. I've done many things since then that I am much more proud of. But I've gotten more reaction out of the Creature thing than anything else." And so does Robert Cornthwaite, still best known for playing the foolishly idealistic scientist in *The Thing*: "When I saw it, I thought, 'Ah, it's a good movie. Thank God it's a good movie!' Because, I confess, I really didn't know what to expect!"

And here, in fact, is a great truth worth keeping in mind as one sits in the darkness watching a movie unfold and, at times, wondering whatever possessed the actors, director, and producer to have wasted their time on it: the fact that, while one is working on a film, one has no idea whether it's any good until it's shot, assembled, and offered to the world. And even then, there's no telling what the public will make of it. Or as Kim Hunter says in the second book in the series, quoting the makeup man on *Planet of the Apes*: "We're either gonna be real or it's gonna be Mickey Mouse. And we won't know until it gets on the screen."

Finally, there is one theme that emerges rather movingly in nearly every interview, a kind of nostalgic refrain: Our budgets were tiny, we had to work quickly (and often under miserable conditions), the pay was lousy, but we were young, we liked each other, and, dammit, we had fun. □

Room panel engages in a sometimes wild, very opinionated, and always intriguing discussion about current science fiction entertainment. "We try to stay topical," says show producer Lisa Riehn. "The show stays as cur-



The Trocadero, Europe's largest indoor entertainment center, houses the Sci-Fi Channel.

rent as possible by focusing on what is going on right now in the world of science fiction."

Each week, four different guests from the world of SF are featured, discussing everything from Anime to British SF to the *Highlander* series. *War Room* participants have included Robert Englund, Majel Barrett Roddenberry, *Babylon 5* producer John Copeland, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* screenwriter Shari Goodhart, author Daniel Bernadi, Marvel Comics guru Stan Lee, *Dark Shadows* actress Lara Parker, special effects makeup artist John Vulich, *Twilight Zone* screenwriter George Clayton Johnson and more. *War Room* often calls upon a group of "regulars" including former *Sci-Fi Trader* host Orin James and *Babylon 5* producer John Copeland. Riehn hopes to lure Henry Winkler, George Takei, Mark Hamill, and Richard Hatch to the *War Room* in the near future. By the time you read this, even *Sci-Fi Entertainment* Editor Scott Edelman may have appeared on the show!

"We keep in mind what shows our viewers watch," Riehn says, in deciding which developments to cover on the series. The *SF Vortex* staff also pays close attention to which TV series have a particularly captivating storyline each week so they can alert viewers to the episodes that should not be missed.

Enter the *SF Vortex*! And visit the *SF Vortex* area on The Dominion ([www.scifi.com](http://www.scifi.com)) to pose questions for future *War Room* panels, access transcripts of previous discussions, and participate in Vortex polls. □

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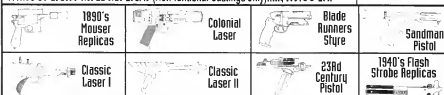
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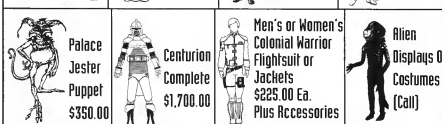
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## SLIDING HOME

Continued from page 72

tingly caught in the momentum of the initial slide on his way to sing the national anthem at Candlestick Park.

The Tennessee-born, Wisconsin-raised Derriks shares with us his background. Unlike his counterparts, his path into *Sliders* began via Southern Baptist Gospel music. A six-stringed, red bass guitar is proudly perched in one corner of his trailer.

"I began writing Southern gospel music because my father, being in church, was a Southern Baptist composer. I returned to Nashville, wrote music, sang backup at the Grand Ole Opry, then decided to study to become an opera singer. My twin brother then convinced me to come to New York to study acting."

With his beginnings in off-Broadway productions, Derriks' hard work paid off when he won a Tony Award for his performance in the hit Broadway show, "Dreamgirls," a twist that would lead to his inclusion into *Sliders*.

"In fact," he continues, "a friend of mine who I worked on 'Dreamgirls' with and who had auditioned for the part in *Sliders* called me about the part. He told me that the director of the show loved my work in 'Dreamgirls,' and that he really wanted me to audition for the part. But I got the sense that the character would be too stereotypical. My agent said, 'I know what you are saying, but maybe there is a way you can change it once you get in.' So I auditioned for the part, and the next thing I know I'm in front of John Landis and all the bigwigs, and they are all laughing and getting a kick out of it. I got the part."

"I don't know if it was so much the character that attracted me as it was the idea of the show. The sci-fi thing about it. The level you could play with it. There was no stopping a show like this, with its imagination, this is what really drew me. With my character, what I was hoping to draw from the writers was a real human being and not just another caricature, which I felt pretty much what the pilot was. I don't know if we achieved getting away from that in the pilot. A lot of critics felt that we hadn't, and some felt that it was OK, but I really wanted a chance to do something spectacular again other than the usual TV humdrum that you see. I have done a lot of sitcoms where the writing is weak, so I was hoping that this show could really grab the audience with its ideas and imagination."

I ask Derriks whether he feels that the show has achieved that yet. Also being a seasoned veteran in the television industry, Derriks shares many similar opinions with the affably cantankerous Rhys-Davies when it comes to creative and imaginative writing.

"It's what the producers always tell us — 'We are a far cry from what we were last year.' But in all honesty, we still haven't reached it, something else is out there that





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we haven't touched on yet. It's like John says, 'You know, we haven't even begun to do this show yet.' And it's the truth, we really haven't. The imaginations haven't stretched as far as they can with a show like this. I just have this sense as an actor and as an artist that we are missing something. I am not a writer, so all I can say is that when I read what comes in, if there is not a whole lot of gratification there because my palate is not satisfied, my imagination is not stretched, my character's imagination isn't stretched, so their depths aren't stretched, then the audiences can't get a chance to really see us in a full, complete picture. Sometimes we have hit it, like with the idea of a living flame you can communicate with. Or there was a disease and none of it was curable because there was no basic penicillin. Now that is interesting to me, and I think that is interesting to the audience. We just did a show where a man is able to carry a baby."

Where Rhys-Davies wishes to focus on socio-political-scientific issues, and O'Connell and Lloyd parallel their own growth with the maturation of their characters, Dericks sees Rembrandt as a universal character. It is apparent that when Dericks talks about Rembrandt, he is quite passionate about him. One quickly learns that he has this vision that Rembrandt is essentially a part of everyone in the audience.

"I want to see Rembrandt grow, yet I see him as universal. He touches the hearts of all races and all people who are blue-collar workers, because he is the layman, the bridge that helps all the non-brains understand what is going on. I want to see a layman come into a situation like this and learn from his peers, ask questions and contribute rather than just standing around being the funny man. I don't mind humor, but perhaps with Rembrandt's street knowledge he has a different sense about people as compared to those who just hit the books all the time. So as he is learning and asking questions, the audience is learning and could be asking the questions. If I can understand and learn, then when I'm hit with a similar situation I don't need to rely on Arturo or Cueball. [Rembrandt affectionately calls Quinn 'Cueball.'] This way we all grow as beings."

When asked to define his character, he answers, "Believe it or not, I am still looking for him. I am still searching for who he was in the past in order to know where he is going. We know he was in the navy and has a family that he cares about. Some producers have suggested to have Rembrandt grow up with his mother, with his father not around. I am like, 'Guys, that is every black man's story on TV.' I would really like it if we could just bring him up as a blue-collar kid who was involved in church music, and maybe he couldn't find his foundation because of a lot of things he saw in church he didn't particularly care about. There was a lot of things growing up as a kid that I saw in church

where I would think, 'Hey, wait a minute, you are saying this, but you are doing this, I don't get it.' So things like that affect you as an actor coming to a character, and you want to bring a little bit of that to your character, but you must also stretch that into an avenue that you have never been before. I have never been in the military, so I find that fascinating about the character. It gives him discipline, a sense of taking care of himself and those around him, and not thinking so much of himself. Last season Rembrandt was a bit of a dark horse, and then they wanted to move him away from the buffoonery and laughter of what he was in the first season, but I think they went a little bit far into the dark side so there was no real personality at all. So now we are trying to strike a happy medium between the two. This guy is a musician. It doesn't mean that he is not intelligent, he is just from another walk of life, and that has to be interesting to the audience to combine the personalities together.

"It is very difficult for a writer to write black characters, particularly for white writers. I tell the writers from time to time because they seem to have this idea that they have to write black, that blackness is not some foreign element to any human being. A human being is a human being. I'll bring whatever is black to it. Which is an important aspect for the writer to keep in mind. I mean, John is not a professor, but he brings to Arturo what he feels a professor is and it is also a part of John. It's the same for Jerry and Sabrina. We all bring certain things to our characters that makes us unique and different. But I am a black man. You look at me on TV and you see a black man; you don't have to put in his slang or the way he talks. I'll do that. All I want a writer to do is write him as a human being. And I think that is the problem a lot of the time when you have white writers who feel like they have to write for a black character. You write for a person. If they are Asian, Indian, or whatever, the actor will bring in whatever culture is needed for that part."

Dericks' other credits on television include starring in such series as *Drexell's Class* and *Whoops*. He has also guest starred on several series, including *Roseanne*, *Then, LA Law*, *A Different World*, and one of his fondest memories, a recurring character on *The Equalizer*.

Far too soon, my 12 hour visit to the set of *Sliders* has come to an end. But unlike the characters played by my four newfound friends, I can return home, while our heroic quartet must continue its stay on yet another parallel Earth, a magical world that only exists at Universal Studios and each week on our television sets. *Sliders* can be seen in the United States on Friday nights at 9:00, and in the United Kingdom on Tuesday at 20:00 on Sky 2.

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## BEYOND DATA

Continued from page 47



Data's wits are put to the test when a sentient holodeck incarnation threatens the Enterprise.

I've been doing. And I felt that *Phenomenon* was a good balance; it was a one scene part, but it was my favorite scene in the movie; it was beautifully written. The picture I'm doing now is called *Out to Sea*, with Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. And it's just pure comedy. It's vastly different from anything I've ever done because I'm British, and I'm this mean cruise director. Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau work for me. They're dance hosts on the ship, and I hate them, they hate me — that's the sort of a dynamic we create."

It should be of no surprise that Spiner has gravitated towards a comedy; on *Next Generation*, part of Data's charm was his flair for comedy. Indeed, Spiner has always thought of himself as a comedian, "even when doing serious roles. I've always played comedy, I've always felt that was sort of my bag. I've always thought of Data as a comic character," explains Spiner. "Slightly tragic-comic, mainly because he wants to be something he's not. In *Independence Day*, I also saw the character as a comic character. I don't know that he was necessarily on the page, but that's the way I saw it and that's the way they let me do it."

Even in casual conversation, Spiner's sharp humor comes through. Case in point: When asked if he's missed getting into the make-up required to turn him into his android alter ego, Data, Spiner jokes, "Oh, yeah, I just couldn't wait to have pounds of gold powder packed into my face again." His sarcasm belies the good-natured humor in his voice.

For now, Spiner is content with his career and has no immediate plans to return to series television. "Right now, I'm kind of enjoying not doing a series, and being able to do some feature stuff instead," he confides. "I'm lucking into some nice parts, and as long as that continues, I'm not really looking for a series. But if something came my way, I don't know, I have no idea." □

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# MARCH • APRIL U.S. PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

## DAYTIME

| TIME  | Monday - Friday                                    | Saturday                                       | Sunday            |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 6:00  | Informational                                      | Informational                                  | Informational     |
| 6:30  |                                                    |                                                |                   |
| 7:00  | Animation Station: The Droids/The Ewoks            |                                                |                   |
| 7:30  | Capt. Scarlet/Stingray                             |                                                |                   |
| 8:00  | New Adv of Giganator (Fri: The Odyssey)            |                                                |                   |
| 8:30  | Mon-Thu: Inside Space (Anti-Gravity Room / Friday) |                                                |                   |
| 9:00  | Lost in Space                                      | Saturday Anime (movie)                         | Sci-Fi Buzz       |
| 9:30  |                                                    |                                                | Inside Space      |
| 10:00 | Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea                    |                                                | SF Vortex         |
| 10:30 |                                                    |                                                | Sci-Fi Trader     |
| 11:00 | Dark Shadows                                       | Anti-Gravity Rm/Odyssey/Deepwater <sup>1</sup> | Alien Nation      |
| 11:30 | Dark Shadows                                       | The Odyssey                                    |                   |
| Noon  | Ripley's Believe It or Not                         | My Secret Identity/Space Patrol <sup>1</sup>   | The Web           |
| 12:30 |                                                    | Dracula: The Series                            |                   |
| 1:00  | Mysteries, Magic, Miracles                         | Sci-Fi Buzz                                    | The New Edge      |
| 1:30  | Monsters                                           | Trailer Park                                   | C-Net Central     |
| 2:00  | Amazing Stories/Night Gallery <sup>1</sup>         | Moonlight Matinee                              | Sightings         |
| 2:30  | Ray Bradbury Theater/Beyond Reality <sup>1</sup>   |                                                |                   |
| 3:00  | The Incredible Hulk                                |                                                | Moonlight Matinee |
| 3:30  |                                                    |                                                |                   |
| 4:00  | The Bionic Woman                                   | Movie: Mystery Science                         |                   |
| 4:30  |                                                    | Theater 3000                                   |                   |
| 5:00  | The Six Million Dollar Man                         |                                                | Moonlight Matinee |
| 5:30  |                                                    |                                                |                   |
| 6:00  | Mon: The Odyssey Tue-Fri: Twilight Zone            | Sci-Fi Trader                                  |                   |
| 6:30  | Mon: Sci-Fi Trader Tue-Fri: Tales/Darkside         | SF Vortex (new)/Deepwater Black                |                   |

## EVENING

| Time  | Monday                         | Tuesday                        | Wednesday                      | Thursday                       | Friday              | Saturday       | Sunday       |
|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 7:00  | Time Trax/Q. Leap <sup>1</sup> | Time Trax/Q. Leap <sup>1</sup> | Time Trax/Q. Leap <sup>1</sup> | Time Trax/Q. Leap <sup>1</sup> | She Wolf/London     | Sci-Fi Feature | Sightings    |
| 7:30  |                                |                                |                                | Inside Space                   |                     | Film           |              |
| 8:00  | Tekwar/SeaQuest <sup>1</sup>   | Tekwar/SeaQuest <sup>1</sup>   | Tekwar/SeaQuest <sup>1</sup>   | Tekwar/SeaQuest <sup>1</sup>   | Movie               |                | Swamp Thing  |
| 8:30  |                                |                                |                                |                                |                     |                | Swamp Thing  |
| 9:00  | Forever Knight                 | Forever Knight                 | Forever Knight                 | Forever Knight                 |                     | Sci-Fi Feature | The Flash    |
| 9:30  |                                |                                |                                |                                |                     | Film or        |              |
| 10:00 | "V"                            | VR 5                           | Sightings                      | Sci-Fi Buzz                    | Friday 13th: Series | Sci-Fi Channel | Robocop: The |
| 10:30 |                                |                                |                                | Inside Space                   |                     | original movie | Series       |

## LATE NIGHT

| Time     | Monday                         | Tuesday                        | Wednesday                      | Thursday                       | Friday              | Saturday        | Sunday         |
|----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 11:00    | Time Trax/Q. Leap <sup>1</sup> | Time Trax/Q. Leap <sup>1</sup> | Time Trax/Q. Leap <sup>1</sup> | Time Trax/Q. Leap <sup>1</sup> | She Wolf/London     | Movie: Mystery  | The Web        |
| 11:30    |                                |                                |                                |                                |                     | Science Theater |                |
| Midnight | Tekwar/SeaQuest <sup>1</sup>   | Tekwar/SeaQuest <sup>1</sup>   | Tekwar/SeaQuest <sup>1</sup>   | Tekwar/SeaQuest <sup>1</sup>   | Movie               | 3000            | The New Edge   |
| 12:30    |                                |                                |                                |                                |                     |                 | C /Net Central |
| 1:00     | Forever Knight                 | Forever Knight                 | Forever Knight                 | Forever Knight                 |                     | Trailer Park    | Sci-Fi Trader  |
| 1:30     |                                |                                |                                |                                |                     | Sci-Fi Feature  | SF Vortex      |
| 2:00     | "V"                            | VR 5                           | Sightings                      | Sci-Fi Buzz                    | Friday 13th: Series | Film of         | Sightings      |
| 2:30     |                                |                                |                                | Inside Space                   |                     | Sci-Fi Channel  |                |
| 3:00     | Informational                  | Informational                  | Informational                  | Thriller                       | Thriller            | Original Movie  | Trailer Park   |
| 3:30     |                                |                                |                                |                                |                     | RoboCop: Series |                |

All programming shown Eastern Standard Time. Please adapt for your local time zone. All programming subject to change. This schedule is effective through 2/28/96.

<sup>1</sup> Sci-Fi Movie airs one week per month. \*\*\*Friday, 8:30 am: Anti-Gravity Room. <sup>2</sup> New series begins March 31. Extended programming Saturday Late Nights: 4:30 am Kitchik: The Night Stalker; 5:30 am: Tales From the Darkside

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